

THE CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS

The 63rd Annual Meeting

2014-2015 Annual Report

CT PRINCIPALS' CENTER BOARD OF CONTROL

Submitted by Brian Hendrickson, Chair

The Connecticut Association of Schools established the Principals' Center to address the professional development and related needs of practicing principals and to support the professional development of aspiring principals. The Connecticut State Department of Education has been an important partner with CAS in promoting the Principals' Center by providing both technical and financial assistance. CAS Staff members, Everett Lyons and Michael Galluzzo, are co-directors of the Center. The Center is served by an advisory committee of experienced principals, superintendents, representatives of graduate and undergraduate educational leadership and education programs, and educational consultants.

In order to provide professional support for principals and advance the professional development of aspiring principals, the work of the Center has been organized into six strands of action:

- Strand #1 Future School Leaders: Development of future educational leaders
- Strand #2 Career Principals: Providing quality leadership development for beginning and veteran school leaders
- Strand #3 Critical Issues: Advancing the understanding and advocacy of issues relevant to educational leaders
- Strand #4 Recognition: Recognizing, celebrating and sharing examples of achievements and best practices

Each strand has its own committee of school administrators and consultants who plan and implement activities relevant to its focus. The existing committees have served hundreds of principals and aspiring principals throughout Connecticut this year in the provision of an impressive variety and depth of programs. In the interest of time, I will share with you here the primary activities of each committee.

Strand #1: Future School Leaders

- Leadership Academies (Teacher Leadership)

Our Meriden Leadership Academy was conducted for the fourth year in the Meriden Public Schools. Twenty teacher leaders completed a five session sequence and demand within the district for this experience remains high. A fifth cohort has already been scheduled for next year.

This current school year saw the expansion of the academy offering with a district-based program in the East Hartford Public Schools and a separate cohort which was organized here at CAS for small districts that might not be able to support a district-specific program. Our success in East Hartford has already led to a commitment for a 2015-2016 Academy in the district and several smaller districts have contacted us about enrollment in the CAS cohort for next year. Next school year will see the implementation of the Bloomfield Leadership Academy in the Bloomfield Public Schools.

All academy sessions have been co-led by Ev Lyons and Mike Galluzzo with specialized support by Pat Howley.

- Administrator Certification Program (UCAPP)

The Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS) and the Department of Educational Leadership at the University of Connecticut's NEAG School of Education (NSOE) have continued a partnership which aims to address an increasing shortage of qualified administrators to fill positions of leadership within Connecticut's schools. The Principals' Center has specific responsibilities for conducting the clinical component of the University of Connecticut Administrator Preparation Program (UCAPP), a nationally recognized series of courses and internships that prepares candidates for the 092 intermediate administrator certification and leadership positions primarily at the school building and central office levels. As an active partner in this program, the Principals' Center brings its resources including aspiring administrator's program, administrator induction program, statewide network of seasoned mentors, and well-established relationships with schools throughout the state. CAS and NSOE, with their combined resources, believe that they have the capacity to address the critical issue of administrator shortages and, in the process, build the premier school leader preparation program in the nation.

As we complete our tenth year of experience with UCAPP, the Center successfully managed six cohorts with a total enrollment of 75 students, linking leadership students to experienced mentors, helping students develop leadership plans tied to program objectives, meeting regularly with students and their mentors, helping to develop authentic experiences linked to courses, translating these experiences into products and artifacts for inclusion in an electronic portfolio, becoming familiar with course content, and participating in the department-wide curriculum revision process to accommodate the CAS conditions for partnership and the demands of NCATE accreditation. This program is directed by Mike Buckley.

- New Leaders Academy

For 2013-2014, the steering committee reorganized the format of the former Mentor-Mentee Program and its successful reception resulted in a continuation this past year of the same facilitated-discussions structure. Six sessions were held on such topics as an update on critical legal issues, using technology in the instructional setting, designing effective professional learning for staff, practicing successful hiring practices, and conducting difficult conversations with staff. Following each large-group presentation, participants met in facilitated discussions around the session theme. Nineteen new administrators participated and additional activities to introduce new administrators to CAS and, specifically the NLA, will occur for next fall to increase this number. For the past six years, the Principals' Center has opened up its New Leaders Academy workshops to aspiring administrators participating in Southern Connecticut State University's Educational Leadership Program. Over 160 SCSU interns attended at least one of these workshops this year. Rosie Vojtek, principal of Ivy Drive Elementary School in Bristol, serves as the practitioner coordinator for this program.

Strand #2: Career Principals

- Career Principals

The Principals' Center will again offer the popular Summer Leadership Institute. Supported by funding from the Connecticut State Department of Education, CASCD, SERC, and commercial sponsorships, the Summer Leadership Institute will be held on June 25th and 26th at the Heritage in Southbury with the theme around the personalized learning. Nick Donahue, president and CEO of the Nelli Mae Education Foundation and Marc Brackett, director of the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, will be the keynoters during the two-day workshop. Additionally, exemplar practitioners from Connecticut will offer breakout sessions keyed to the implementation of mastery-based learning in the instructional setting. Following the June session, communities of practice will focus on the implementation of mastery-based learning.

The CAS Executive Coaching Program is evolving in new and differing ways in response to state funding issues that impact both the school districts and CAS as a program provider. This year, the CAS Executive Coaching Program has coaches in 18 schools in thirteen districts. CAS executive coaches are also serving as project coaches in the 20 schools participating in the League of Innovative Schools. Susan Kennedy and Sal Randazzo serve as the CAS coordinators for these programs.

Strand #3: Critical Issues

- Legislative Committee

The Critical Issues Committee merged with the Legislative Committee in 2013-2014 due to the overlap in functions and purposes as well as to highlight the more activist role that CAS has played in Hartford. Members of the legislative committee met in January to identify key issues for the legislative session, to discuss the potential coalitions with other organizations and to consider lobbying strategies. The committee reviewed the legislative agenda from CAPSS which closely aligned with the priorities of building principals and the interest of schools. The major issues identified include: early childhood education, specifically preschool for all and elimination of required testing for kindergarten; expansion of services for English Learners; elimination of several high school reform requirements, which are no longer relevant in the current context. Karissa Niehoff, CASS Executive Director, provided testimony to the legislature's Education Committee, as did another member of the committee. In addition, a group of committee members met with legislative leaders and with the governor's education advisor to discuss the priorities and needs of schools and the issues that CAS supports.

Strand #4: Recognition

Recognition ceremonies were held for various grade levels under the auspices of the Principals' Center. Among these celebrations were the following:

High School Arts Banquet
Governor's Scholars Luncheon
Principal/Assistant Principal of the Year

Middle Level Scholar Leader Recognition
Elementary Arts Festival
School Volunteer Recognition
Elementary Program Recognition

Other Activities of Note:

- The Center was charged by the Connecticut State Department of Education with the continued training of school and district leaders on the administrative evaluation and support model. Everett Lyons and Mike Galluzzo served as lead trainers supported by practitioner Richard Gusenburg. CAS entered into a contractual arrangement this year with ReVision Learning to support district calibration work sponsored by the CSDE. Workshops were held periodically throughout the school year and district-based calibration activities took place in over twenty districts.
- CAS is engaged as one of the partners in Lead CT, a state leadership initiative, with various staff members assigned to a number of committees active under the LEAD CT umbrella. These activities include:
 - Development of a Policy Fellows Program
 - Implementation of a Residency Program to develop future school leaders
 - The implementation of a Turnaround Principals' PLC
 - Creation of additional tools for the administrator evaluation model
 - CAS executive coaches are serving as coaches in 24 the schools in the Alliance districts.
- Funded by the Connecticut Department of Education, the CCSS Leadership Community of Practice was a seven session series developed by CAS this past year and devoted to leadership issues related to the implementation of the Common Core State Standards (in CT referred to as Connecticut Core Standards). Each session featured a keynote speaker on the selected topic, followed by an implementers' panel which was comprised of Connecticut practitioners who shared their experiences in successfully developed/implemented some aspect of the topic under discussion. These activities were followed by facilitated breakout sessions in which the participants discuss the presentations, share their own experiences, seek support and assistance from other members, and express their needs for further discussion topics
- Deeper Dimensions of Leadership is a small and growing group of educational leaders, consisting primarily of principals, who meet monthly and focus on the person as leader. In an unstructured setting, principals engage in personal dialogues on their inner life as leaders. Their personal and professional roles and goals are explored as they search together to find integration and balance in their lives. The process facilitates principals learning and practicing skills of listening, reflection, questioning and feedback in a safe environment of self-reflection. Pat Howley facilitates this group.
- The Center sponsored a session of The Breakthrough Coach (TBC) this year in response to the managerial needs of principals in conjunction with teacher evaluation. To date the Center has sponsored thirteen sessions with over 425 teams participating. We will be looking to schedule another session for the 2015-2016 school year with the addition of a special follow-up one-day workshop for participating teams from the fall.
- Complementary Managers, as part of the state-supported work for educator evaluation and support, were placed in nine schools as part of the state study. Results have shown a significant positive impact on the use of time by school leaders for teacher evaluation and support when the complementary manager is present in the building to assume some of the managerial responsibilities often assigned to building leaders.
- The Center continued its involvement with the Connecticut - Shandong Province (China) Exchange Program by hosting several delegations of Chinese educators. The lack of state funding and the increased demands on school leaders precluded the usual exchange trips for Connecticut educators to visit China and form partnerships with their Chinese counterparts. However, several delegations of Chinese teachers and administrators were hosted by CAS and exposed to the American educational system.

I am proud to share with you the accomplishments of the Center for this year. Particular thanks are in order for all the practitioners who have supported the Center's work for their dedication and voluntary efforts. Special thanks go also to the 75 administrators who volunteered as mentors in the UCAPP program who are supporting the next generation of school leaders. Special recognition for their contributions is extended to CAS administrative assistants Erin Guarino, Anna Simeonidis, Noreen Liberopoulos, and Roberta O'Connor, and to our administrative team: CAS Executive Director Karissa Niehoff, CAS UCAPP Clinical Director Michael Buckley, Tim Breslin, Regina Birdsell, Earl Bidwell, Pat Howley, Sal Randazzo, Susan Kennedy, and Principals' Center Co-Directors Everett Lyons and Mike Galluzzo.