

CAS ANNUAL MEETING  
May 10, 2012  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Good morning! Thank-you all for sharing your time and energies with us today, throughout this past year and for many previous years. You are the core of our membership; without your willingness to volunteer your time, and share your wisdom, CAS' direction would not be so clearly defined, nor could we provide meaningful support for school leaders statewide. Thank-you for continuing to shape the direction of our association.

It is the concept of "direction" that I would like to use to frame my remarks this morning. Typically a report such as this is reflective in nature- looking back on the activities and accomplishments of the previous year in summative format. In keeping with the necessary trends in assessment of learning, I would like to present a report that is more formative than summative, as today's meeting isn't a break in the action- where certain work ends and new work begins- it is just a pause for reflection along a continuous journey of supportive educational improvement. Thus, all that I share today as accomplishments within the past year are actually activities that will continue in the future. This year was not only productive, but pivotal in terms of CAS's role and direction.

Back in October, the CAS Board of Directors identified six areas of focus which shaped the work of our staff and committees this year:

- Early Childhood Education
- Secondary School Reform
- School Climate
- Teacher and Administrator Standards and Evaluation Plans
- Legislative and liaison work
- Expanding and engaging membership; expanding programs

I am happy to report that significant work was done in each of these areas; a result of the outstanding collaboration between staff and member principals. In addition to work in these areas, significant new activities occurred which helped to forge relationships with important colleagues, including Governor Malloy, Commissioner Pryor, CAPSS, CABE and other educational associations. There is a

wealth of information available for review in your packets, but I would like to share just a few highlights relative to each focus area.

**Highlights:**

- Early Childhood Education- In addition to the work done within the K-12 CAS realm, Regina Birdsell has been intimately involved in early childhood work at the state level. She is currently on the committee which is developing standards for Pre-K programs; the work done by our elementary board and committees has helped to establish CAS' reputation as a critical resource in this area.  
CAS will be strengthening its work in early childhood education and providing increased professional development opportunities for school leaders.
- Secondary School Reform- The High School Graduation Issues Task Force has slowed its work pace, but the report is expected by January 1, 2013. CAS committees continue to offer professional development in secondary reform areas, but await further guidance from the SDE. The Task Force recognizes that schools are anxiously awaiting information from the SDE about secondary reform as we have legislation in place. The report that is ultimately issued may recommend changes to that legislation- especially around how credits for graduation are earned.
- School Climate- After playing a key role last year in modifying the language in the School Climate legislation, CAS staff and committees have done tremendous work in this area. CAS sponsored Climate workshops; The School Climate Task Force developed surveys for students, parents and staff, which will be in the hands of school districts very soon. The Task Force also gathered resources to support schools in developing school climate plans. CAS offered many workshops and provided guidance to multiple districts around improving school climate.
- Teacher and Administrator Standards and Evaluation Plans- As you know, it is the PEAC group which is charged with the development of evaluation models for teachers, administrators, non-certified staff, and along with the models, a plan for implementation of the new plans. Dennis is a member of the Teacher Evaluation Model workgroup; I am working on the Principal

Evaluation Model. (I will say more about this work when we discuss future work). The Principals' Center again offered its Teacher Evaluation Series, and once again, the series received rave reviews. Professional development in this area will be a CAS priority next year.

- Expanding and engaging membership; expanding programs- We continue to expand the programs and services that we offer, and are working to attract new members, especially at the elementary and middle levels. It is our hope that with the new emphasis on Early Childhood Education, and other legislation, our membership at both levels will increase.
- Legislative and liaison work- It is in this area that we have made perhaps our greatest gains. I made it my expressed priority this year to make CAS not just a recognized name in Hartford, but a respected presence across the state; an association that is known for its unwavering focus on educational improvement- what's best for kids- and for representing the voice of its membership- school leaders; practitioners in the field who also have as their unwavering focus what is best for students. It was my intent to promote CAS as the association with the greatest capacity to communicate with school leaders, listen to their issues and challenges, provide professional support as best as we can, and then share their message with key educational leaders. I want it to be that when people think of school leadership, they think of CAS.

We spent quite a bit of time in Hartford this year, both at the LOB and at the SDE, and in meetings and regular conversations with colleagues from CAPSS and CABE. Our relationships with both of those associations are now very strong; perhaps enhanced by a need to rally the troops this year, but as a result of regular communication and collaboration, we have become great professional friends. Months ago, we established an alliance of sorts with CAPSS, CABE, CBIA, ConnCAN and CCER- we were quickly dubbed "The Big Six" by the media. Our purpose in coming together was to support particular elements of school reform contained in SB 24. We have held press conferences and issued multiple public statements regarding our collective position. We have met as a group with key Democrat and Republican leaders, and have spent many late nights at the LOB waiting to testify. The result of our efforts is a positive one for CAS. Commissioner Pryor and his staff have asked us to solicit opinions and ideas from sitting principals; CAS is now

included as a key member of many of the highest level planning and implementation committees; CAPSS and CABE consider us to be the “sleeping giant” of implementing school reform; our name, and YOUR WORK, are now much better understood and appreciated.

On many occasions you have received emails and/or been invited to share your feedback regarding reform issues and SB 24. Commissioner Pryor, Senator Stillman, Charlene Russell-Tucker and other SDE leaders have welcomed meetings with CAS principals and been appreciative of practitioner feedback. We have been asked to provide consistent vetting of the PEAC work, and going forward, will be inviting principals to respond to any or all educational issues in the legislation.

#### Additional Accomplishments:

- The Executive Coach program experienced another successful year under the leadership of Mike Buckley, Susan Kennedy and Ev Lyons. Coaches continue to influence practicing school leaders; feedback is excellent. The nature and scope of the Executive Coach program will likely undergo some degree of transformation as we anticipate working in alliance with the SDE, CAPSS, UCONN and other key leaders to develop and implement a job-embedded coaching model.
- SSP work- Earle Bidwell and Dave Maloney have joined forces to provide many workshops for schools seeking help in implementing SSP's. Workshops have provided information and featured CT educators who have made tremendous strides already. SSP training has already been planned for next year.
- NESSC- Janet has been a fantastic liaison for CT with the NESSC. We have a core group of high school participants and are now establishing a number of middle schools. She will continue to be the state liaison and help to align Consortium work with NEASC and Common Core and other CT initiatives.
- Student Activities- Dave Maloney has overseen successful State Student Advisory Council, Student Leadership programs, Activity programs,

Bandjam, KiDSMARATHON, Geno's Reading Team...programs continue to expand.

### **CIAC Programs:**

Across the nation, many states have experienced significant legal challenges that have cost their associations dearly- financially, in terms of self-governance, and in reputation. For the past seven years, the CIAC has avoided the courts. I think this speaks highly of the quality of our board members, the integrity of their thinking regarding policies and procedures, and the thoughtful manner in which they consider and handle issues. The board has demonstrated that they are less concerned about being punitive than they are about being purposeful when imposing sanctions; fines remain low, and more often now participation in coaching education modules and/or the Athletic Program Evaluation Process is a part of a sanction.

We are in negotiations with Mohegan Sun about next year's basketball tournament finals.

We have emerging concerns- increase in number of virtual school situations, home-school challenges in other states, foreign student recruitment. We are also looking carefully at our out-of-season coaching regulations. A number of state associations have abandoned or greatly reduced restrictions in this area.

Connecticut has the Section One winner of The Spirit of Sport program. Coaching Education continues to grow. More than 10,000 coaches in the state have participated in any number of our programs- Concussion Education, online CEU courses, and the 45-hour certification course.

### **Technology:**

Karen Packtor was our lead for many successful administrator IPAD workshops. Matt Fischer led our transition to an outside server and has been a key member of the NFHS Technology Committee- he was selected to guide our national organization.

We hope to enhance our use of technology by moving toward more continual streaming of news and events, and reducing printed Bulletins (3 or 4 per year)? More online professional development opportunities.

**Sponsorships:**

Stephanie Ford has done phenomenal work to maintain and develop new sponsorship relationships. Last year, she secured agreements with Team IP and MSG Varsity- the first tv station that will be paying a rights fee- a minimum of \$68,000 over three years. This year we signed an agreement with PlayOn Sports to enhance our webstreaming capacity. She is working with additional potential sponsors right now.

So much great work continues to be done by CAS Committees and staff members!

Looking ahead- whether it be this afternoon or into the future in general- we are committed to continuing great work. We want the scope of our work to be defined by the needs of our member school leaders. That being said, we are intent on engaging our membership more frequently and in new ways. We want to continue to bring principals together to discuss significant issues- such as legislation- and provide feedback to the folks in Hartford. We will continue to strengthen relationships with colleagues, and while we will not agree on everything, we will look to find common ground and model collaboration at the association level. We will do our best to communicate the needs and concerns of school principals, as well as the ideas and strategies. When it comes to school change, you are the fulcrum; your voice should continue to guide the direction of CAS, and ultimately, the direction of education in the state of Connecticut.

Thank-you for your dedicated work in your schools and with CAS; I look forward to an exciting upcoming year!