

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT
53rd Annual Meeting - May 12, 2005

Good morning and thank you for supporting CAS through your attendance today.

On June 30th I will be completing my 25th year with CAS-CIAC and I have had the distinct privilege and pleasure, for those 25 years, to be the recipient of many wonderful accolades from all segments of society for the great accomplishments we have seen and for the growth of the association during that time. As you well know it is always very delightful to have nice things said about your work, especially by those in the field of education who we try diligently to serve well. And it is with great pride and pleasure that I have accepted those complements, but always and only on behalf of the hundreds of member school administrators that have volunteered thousands of hours of time on our behalf. Because it is your work, not mine, that we have succeeded in enhancing the quality of education in our state. These 25 years have been an absolute delight to be able to share with you in the exploration of new ideas and projects and then find way to design programs to advance those ideas.

This past year under the able leadership of president gates, CIAC chairman Bill Barney, SABC chairwoman Janet Garagliano, and CAHSP, CAMSP, and CAESP chairs, Bob Pitocco, Preston Shaw and Lou Pear, respectively, we have been able to advance the goals of our three year plan and have continued to develop new strategies and programs to serve the needs of our members. In all cases we have never strayed from our overall mission - that of providing exemplary programs and services that promote excellence in the education of all children.

These past 25 years has also provided me with the unique opportunity to seek out talented people to get on the CAS bus - the proverbial bus that Collins refers to in his book "Good to Great" - and to lead a staff full of energy and ideas, a staff which always want to improve that which exists and assume new challenges that will benefit our schools and our school leaders. My staff, colleagues both past and present, as those of you who have worked with them know, are extraordinarily talented and hard working leaders.

We did things this past year to strengthen our staff and to position the association for additional growth for the immediate future. We recognized the need to build a stronger operational staff within our accounting department to take care of the additional workload and to expedite our response time in keeping our financial accounts current. We accomplished that by adding personnel to that department without adding to the overall number of support staff. In addition, we recognized that it was vital to the continued growth and success of the CIAC that we provide additional staff in that area. Fortunately, we were able to adjust job functions among existing personnel and with some creative budgeting practices, we were able to get Paul Hoey, retired principal of Newington High School and a person of high respect and integrity to retire and get on our bus. As past chair of the CIAC board, Paul was able to come on board and provide Tony Mosa with the help he needed to allow for us to expand the number of activities we are now sponsoring. It was also important to recognize the need to concentrate our efforts in such areas as the

teaching of sportsmanship, education athletic directors and coaches and assessing the quality of high school athletic programs, all of which we have begun to accomplish by making that decision. We also have had the opportunity this year to expand our Internet and web site services. With the talent of Matt Fischer and Karen Packtor, we have probably the most sophisticated web-based communications system with our member schools, state officials groups, and the media than any other state association in the country. The redesigned system not only provides schools the ability to enter schedules efficiently on a standard interface, it offers a link-building tool that allows creation of schedules and game results links for schools and league websites which are automatically updated when schools update CIAC data. In our middle level operation, we are finding Earle Bidwell, which is unfortunate but true, continuing to enthusiastically and forcefully promote and champion the importance of middle level education . there appears to be a growing assault on the value and importance of middle level school grade configurations. Earle's reputation in middle level education in Connecticut has made him a valued resource for our schools and local boards of education. In addition to the above changes this year we again allowed the creative genius who insists on riding the front seat of the CAS bus and always trying to take over the controls with his new ideas, our infamous Bob Carroll, to promote two new activities in addition to all of his other elementary division responsibilities. Back a few months ago bob was successful in organizing the first CAS congressional forum where he was able to gather four of our 7 congressional delegation at the heritage village inn to meet with a select group of 80 school principals and engage in a dialogue on NCLB. He also spearheaded the idea for member schools to send their local tsunami relief fund money to CAS with the understanding that 100% of the money would go towards rebuilding a school. To date CAS has been successful in collecting over \$250,000 and is now in the process of building a school in Sri Lanka.

We are also in the process of reassessing our unified sports program under the direction of Ann Malafronte. The program has been in existence for 10 years and our sponsoring agent the Connecticut Special Olympics along with CAS will be holding a think tank to evaluate its successes and weaknesses and to design a course of action for the next 10 years. Such issues as funding the program and the degree of control exerted by those funding sources will be discussed as well as ways to involve a greater number of schools and athletes possibly through athletic leagues will be debated.

While all of those activities were and are being played out, we have also placed a special emphasis on steadily moving forward on two high school fronts with Dennis Carrithers. We have seen this past year a steady growth in our assisting schools that are planning for their next New England Association of Schools' evaluation. CAS has been asked to help several schools in that process. High on CAS' priority agenda is to grow that initiative, especially at the middle and elementary level. The other initiative that Dennis is working hard on is to assist our high schools to further the cause of high school reform by using breaking ranks, and the reconceptualized Connecticut high school document as templates for examining existing policies and practices.

Finally, I wish to briefly touch upon one more advancement which we will be making public very shortly. In the very near future we will be signing a contract to partner with

the University of Connecticut in its UCAPP program. The agreement will forge a partnership relationship with UCONN whereby CAS will be responsible for the internship phase of the UCAPP degree program. Mike Buckley will be the director of that program in addition to serving as the director of the principals center. All other responsibilities that Mike now carries, mainly SABC, student leadership and legislation will be assumed by Dennis Carrithers. Dennis will be working additional days of employment to handle the additional roles. In addition to that change in assignment we will be employing personnel to serve as cohort leaders in the UCAPP program. Eventually there will be a need to employ up to 8 cohort leaders for the UCAPP internship program.

So as you can see the face of CAS is again changing. But, fortunately changing in many good ways. We hope you agree. Our foremost concern, that of maintaining and fostering good relationships with state legislators, has been good this year. We have been able to assist several of them in their work and, at least to date, have not had any serious issues that required addressing. However, I need to remind you that the legislature remains in session until midnight June 8th. Also, we have been able to stay out of the court house for well over 5 years although we came close just this past month. So, all in all, we have maintained our ability to regulate CIAC activities without interference, however, always with an eye towards making sure that our rules are fair, consistently applied, reasonable and defensible. Other than the legislature and the legal system, perhaps the two greatest issues facing the association is that of perpetuating strong association leadership by cultivation opportunities for the best and brightest young administrators to serve on our committees and boards. In a more global sense, finding quality people to assume the principalship at all levels.. We are at a critical point in time and something needs to be done and done fast which leads me to my final remarks. Those remarks are about you. Most of you, here today, have become my close colleagues of many years and in many cases those colleagues who have also become my friends.

During the past two months I have learned much about what truly counts in life. I learned what counts most is family followed closely by friends. Unfortunately, what often becomes your most immediate and time consuming priority is your job because you care so much about what you do and a consequence both you personally and your family suffers.