

- National Federation of State High School Associations
- National Association of Secondary School Principals
  - Association for Middle Level Education
- National Association of Elementary School Principals

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## SIX STATE ORGANIZATIONS ALLY FOR EDUCATION REFORM

On February 14th, CAS participated in a joint press conference with the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS), Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE), Connecticut Business and Industry Association (CBIA), Connecticut Council for Education Reform (CCER), and Connecticut Coalition for Achievement Now (ConnCAN). These six organizations came together - for the first time - to form a common position on important educational challenges facing our state. While these organizations acknowledged that they had their own individual agendas and that they did not always agree on how to solve problems in our education system, they did share common positions on several key issues including:

- educator preparation and certification
- teacher evaluation and support
- principal evaluation and support
- relationship between time and learning
- school and district accountability
- pre-kindergarten
- education contract negotiations

Representing CAS at the press conference was Executive Director Karissa Niehoff. "This is an exciting time to be in education in Connecticut," said Dr. Niehoff. "We have

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## WHEN BULLYING BEHAVIOR MAY ALSO BE CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR

By Leander Dolphin, Associate, Shipman & Goodwin LLP



**Leander Dolphin**

When the legislature made significant changes to the bullying law in July 2011, it imposed many new obligations on school districts and building-level administrators. Tucked into the law is language now

requiring "the principal of a school, or the principal's designee, to notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency when such principal, or the principal's designee, believes that any acts of bullying constitute criminal conduct." Public Act No. 11-232.

Many administrators have asked the questions: "How do I know when an act of bullying constitutes criminal conduct? And when should I notify the police that a bullying act may constitute criminal conduct?" In the following, we will review how to answer these questions, including identifying some common crimes that may be implicated by bullying behavior.

In Connecticut, bullying is defined as the repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal, or electronic communication, such as cyberbullying, or a physical act or gesture directed at another student in the same school district that: (a) causes physical or emotional harm to the student or damage to the student's property; (b) places the student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself, or of damage to the student's property; (c) creates a hostile environment at school for such student; (d) infringes on the rights of the student at school; or (e) substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of a school. Public Act No. 11-232.

After a determination is made that student conduct constitutes bullying (as defined above), school principals or their designees must consider whether the conduct should be reported to the police for

investigation. Significantly, school administrators are not required to determine that a crime has in fact been committed. That is a determination left to the appropriate law enforcement authorities. Rather, administrators must report when they reasonably believe that bullying behavior constitutes criminal conduct.

Therefore, if there has been a determination that conduct is bullying, then principals or their designees must consider whether the conduct could also constitute one of the following criminal acts under Connecticut law.

**Assault** - An individual commits assault when he or she acts with the intent to cause physical injury to another person, and causes such injury to that person (or a third person); when he or she recklessly causes serious physical injury to another person; or when he or she acts with criminal negligence, causing physical injury to another person by means of a deadly weapon, a dangerous instrument or an electronic defense weapon. Conn. Gen. Stat. § 53a-61.

**Bias Crimes** - A person commits intimidation based on bigotry or bias when such person maliciously, and with specific intent to intimidate or harass another person because of the actual or perceived race, religion, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity or expression of the other person, causes serious physical injury to such other person or to a third person. Conn. Gen. Stat. 53a-181j. An individual also commits intimidation based on bigotry or bias when such person maliciously, and with specific intent to intimidate or harass another person because of the actual or perceived race, religion, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity or expression of such other person, causes a) physical contact with such other person, b) damages, destroys or defaces any real or personal property of such other person, or c) threatens, by word or act, to do either a) or b), if there is reasonable cause to believe that an act described in either a) or b) will occur. Conn. Gen. Stat. 53a-181k.

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## LEGAL MAILBAG

By Attorney Thomas B. Mooney, Neag School of Education, University of Connecticut



**Editor's Note:** *Legal Mailbag* is a regular feature in the CAS BULLETIN. We invite readers to submit short, law-related questions of practical concern to school administrators. Each month we will select questions and publish answers. While these answers cannot be considered formal legal advice, they may be of help to you and your colleagues. We may edit your questions, and we will not identify the authors. Please submit your questions to: <legalmailbag@casciac>

**Q. DEAR MAILBAG:** We have been working very hard to understand this new bullying law, and I think that we are starting to understand the new obligations. But the one question that we couldn't answer is whether there is a statute of limitations. We had one parent come in complaining that an unpleasant exchange between her child and another student should be classified as bullying because there had been an earlier bad interaction five years ago when the students were in third grade. Isn't there some sort of statute of limitations that I can cite so that I don't have to dredge up events from five years ago?

- *Keeping it Simple*

**A. DEAR KEEPING:** Unfortunately, the statute doesn't set forth any limitations on how far back a bullying claim can go. The prior statute made reference to events occurring within a school year, but there is no similar provision in the new definition of "bullying." Rather, the statute simply refers to "repeated conduct." The best we can do is interpret that term reasonably. In this case, I think we can take the position that for conduct to be repeated there must be a connection between the actions and the actions must be close in time. Who knows? We might even be right!

**Q. DEAR MAILBAG:** One of the parents in my school is quite intrusive. Her latest gambit is to "visit" her daughter's fourth grade classroom almost every day. I tried to be tactful and pointed out that she has probably had adequate time to see what goes on in the classroom. But she is quite pushy, and she told me that the school is a public place, and that she will keep attending school with her daughter because she needs to reinforce skills at home. Apparently, she has her sights set on the Ivy League, and wants to get a jump on the admissions process. Can I tell her that she can't come to school with her daughter any more?

- *Off Limits*

**A. DEAR LIMITS:** Given your tolerance of her conduct to date, you may have already created a monster, but let's talk through what you can do to tame her. Parents do not have the right to visit classrooms whenever they want. Rather, such visits are a privilege. While you would likely not want to prohibit parents ever from visiting classrooms, you can place reasonable limits on their visits. Most parents would be more than happy to be able to visit once a year, and on the chance that you want to be gracious, you can permit parents to visit even more often (e.g., two or three times). As long as you enforce those limits consistently, you have every right to tell this parent that she is no longer welcome to visit her daughter's classroom once her allotted visits have occurred.

**Q. DEAR MAILBAG:** The end of the school year is coming, but I fear that the light at the end of the tunnel is an oncoming train headed right for me. The best student in the senior class is quite devout, and she talks publicly and often about how thankful she is to God for her achievements. We honor the valedictorian of the senior class by permitting him or her to give the graduation address. I know that this valedictorian will want to make religious references in her speech. Can I review her speech ahead of time? Should I tell her that as a public school we must keep religion out of her speech? I don't want the Civil Liberties Union on my case.

- *Color Me Agnostic*

**A. DEAR AGNOSTIC:** When students make an individual choice to speak about religion, as a matter of free speech, we must not interfere. To be sure, school officials must take care that their actions neither advance nor inhibit religion. Therefore, school officials cannot promote a particular religious view. Moreover, as with any other student you have the right to ask to see her speech ahead of time, and you would be remiss not to do so. But when students make the individual choice to speak about religion, we must treat that speech as any other speech, and we cannot single out student religious speech for special disfavor.

## ct news & notes

■ The James Morris School (JMS) in Morris has been recognized by the White House for its participation in the KiDSMARATHON fitness program. KiDSMARATHON, a training and education program that helps elementary school students to complete a full marathon in increments over a period of 8-10 weeks, was developed by Olympic runner Rod Dixon and has been sponsored by CAS for the past three years. The program follows the objectives of First Lady Michelle Obama's First Move initiative to encourage children to get active and stay healthy. JMS recently received a personal letter from Michelle Obama congratulating the school for its work. In the letter, she states, "With the right attitude, you can do anything!" For information on getting your school involved in the KiDSMARATHON program, contact Dave Maloney at [dmaloney@casciac.org](mailto:dmaloney@casciac.org).

■ In December 2011, the U.S. Department of Education issued revised regulations for the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA"), the federal law that protects the privacy of education records. These new regulations went into effect January 3, 2012. Shipman & Goodwin LLP has prepared a brief summary of the most significant revisions to existing regulations. The summary can be viewed at [http://65.17.213.85/files/13190\\_SchoolLawAlertFERPA020712.pdf](http://65.17.213.85/files/13190_SchoolLawAlertFERPA020712.pdf).

■ According to a new survey commissioned by ConnCAN, the state's public school educators are reform minded with overwhelming support for performance-based tenure and employment. The survey of 400 teachers and administrators demonstrates strong support for the kinds of education reforms currently being advocated by Governor Dannel Malloy. The survey used a representative sample of educators across all levels of seniority, age, location, and demographics. Newer teachers, who will make up the teaching corps in the decades to come, were particularly supportive of these reforms. For example, while 59 percent of educators overall believe that tenure, promotions and other staffing decisions should be made based upon demonstrated effectiveness in the classroom, that number jumps to 64 percent for educators with 10 or fewer years of experience. To view the results of ConnCAN's survey, visit [http://www.conncan.org/sites/conncan.org/files/conncan\\_jan\\_2012\\_educator\\_survey.pdf](http://www.conncan.org/sites/conncan.org/files/conncan_jan_2012_educator_survey.pdf).

## CELEBRATING NATIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS' WEEK

By Dave Maloney  
Assistant Executive Director

Ever wonder why people behave the way they do? Ever been at a loss to understand why someone said what he or she just said? Ever wish that you responded differently to someone after the fact? What does the amendment to the bullying law have to do with me? Is there a role that administrative assistants can play in improving the school and workplace climate?

These are just a few of the questions that will be explored at the CAS sponsored Conference For School Secretaries and Administrative Assistants on Friday, May 4th at the Aqua Turf Club in Southington.

The conference is a perfect opportunity to treat these professionals as part of the National Administrative Assistant Week for their important contributions to a school's culture and positive learning environment.

Attorney Tom Mooney is the featured morning presenter and a frequent contributor on legal issues affecting schools. His presentation will include up-to-the-minute information on the new school climate legislation and its implications for secretaries and administrative assistants. Conference attendees will also find several practical suggestions on electronic communication in the workplace, student records, special education matters, state and federal laws that apply directly to school personnel as well as a host of other legal matters that only Tom Mooney's famous case studies can uncover!

The afternoon presenter is Marta Koonz, a certified life coach and owner of Energize Your Journey. Marta specializes in creating opportunities for improved communication in the workplace, conflict reduction, and feeling validated - in short - creating a win-win atmosphere for success. Her "true colors" activity sets up all the participants for improved strategies for workplace productivity.

Registration information is available at <http://casciac.org/go?469>. Inquiries about the conference may be directed to Jenn Sylvester or Dave Maloney at 203-250-1111.

## SURVEY RESULTS PROVIDE VALUABLE FEEDBACK FOR GOVERNOR'S TASK FORCE

CAS Executive Director Karissa Niehoff serves on the governor's task force that is charged with analyzing and submitting a report on the secondary school reform legislation. The task force is named "The High School Graduation Requirements Task Force," but it is looking at broader implications of secondary reform statutes.

Dr. Niehoff delivered a presentation to the task force on February 9th which included a summary of the opinions of secondary principals about the components in the current secondary reform laws. The views shared in her presentation were based on the results of a survey conducted by CAS in January. The survey asked member school middle and

high school principals to provide feedback on the main points in the law.

Some general findings include:

- Principals believe secondary reform is necessary.
- Many schools already have reform efforts underway and programs in place.
- Schools/districts heed guidance on the implementation of these laws.
- There is concern over the impact of these laws on the very large and very small districts.
- It is important that there is a connection to other reforms - e.g., Common Core standards and assessments, Evaluation, ESEA waiver implications, etc.
- There is need for ongoing fiscal support to imple-

ment these new requirements.

To view specific findings on components such as increased graduation requirements, Capstone projects, personal education plans, and data-tracking, visit [www.casciac.org/pdfs/Principals\\_Perspective\\_on\\_Current\\_Secondary\\_Reform\\_Legislation.pdf](http://www.casciac.org/pdfs/Principals_Perspective_on_Current_Secondary_Reform_Legislation.pdf).

## THE ANNUAL SUMMER LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

### *"Getting the Focus Right"*

June 27 & 28, 2012 ■ The Heritage Hotel, Southbury

#### **Speakers:**



#### **DAY 1: DR. MIKE SCHMOKER**

Dr. Schmoker is an internationally known and highly acclaimed educator.

<http://mikeschmoker.com/>

#### **DAY 2: COMMISSIONER STEFAN PRYOR**

Our Commissioner is a leader bringing a new focus to CT's efforts to reduce the achievement gap.

[http://www.casciac.org/pdfs/commissioner\\_pryor.pdf](http://www.casciac.org/pdfs/commissioner_pryor.pdf)



In addition to keynote presentations by Dr. Mike Schmoker and Commissioner Stefan Pryor, this year's institute will feature breakout sessions by some of CT's most successful school leaders.

**Registration will be available on the CAS website by March 15th**



## national news & notes

■ California, Massachusetts, and Oklahoma are working on ways to promote, and measure, creativity and innovation in their schools and are now exploring the development of an index that would gauge the extent to which schools provide opportunities to foster these qualities. In Massachusetts, a legislative requirement was enacted last year mandating the development of an index that would "rate every public school on teaching, encouraging, and fostering creativity in students" and be based "in part on the creative opportunities in each school." It cites as examples arts education, debate clubs, science fairs, filmmaking, and independent research. Meanwhile, the California Senate last month approved a bill calling for the development of a voluntary Creative and Innovative Education Index. And Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin recently announced plans for a public-private partnership to produce an innovation index for schools, which she described as a "public measurement of the opportunities for our students to engage in innovative work."

■ Violent crime at the nation's schools is declining, and students and schools are reporting less bullying and gang activity. But new government data reports an increase in cyber bullying and youth suicides. The number of violent deaths declined to 33 in the 2009-10 school year, the lowest number on record since the agencies began collecting data in 1992, according to data released by the U.S. Department of Education and the Department of Justice on Wednesday. In the previous school year, there were 38 such deaths. Thefts and nonfatal violent crimes declined from 1.2 million in 2008 to 828,000 in 2010. While the data show a consistent decline across several indicators, there were increases in a few areas, including cyber bullying and suicides among youth age 5-18 outside of school. "Cyber bullying issue has really moved to center stage and that's probably the next major challenge that school officials and others will have to address," said Ron Stephens, executive director of the National School Safety Center, a nonprofit advocacy organization. He said the higher number of suicides wasn't surprising. "I think that's a number we'll see increasing based on what's happening with all the cyber bullying," Stephens said. Some school safety advocates question whether the numbers are accurate at all, noting the data is collected through surveys and not incident based reporting.

■ A new paper by Stanford edu-economist Eric Hanushek and colleagues offers some scientific data to support the long-standing "conventional wisdom" that principal quality matters for student performance. The paper, called "Estimating the Effect of Leaders on Public Sector Productivity: The Case of School Principals" summarizes findings from observations of over 7,000 principals from 1995 to 2001 in Texas. According to the analysts most conservative estimates, having a highly effective principal will lead the average student to learn 0.05 standard deviations more than he or she would in a school with an average principal. For comparison, studies suggest that teacher effects are about twice this size, though importantly, the learning effects due to a strong principal apply to all students in the school, not just an individual classroom. Hence, the aggregate impact of having an effective principal in a school can be very large. Further, variance in effectiveness among leaders increases with the school poverty rate meaning that the poorest schools are more likely to have either very effective or very ineffective principals. Principal turnover patterns also differ by principal quality and type of school. In other words, analysts find that both the least and most effective principals tend to switch schools more often; this phenomenon is also more pronounced in low-income schools. Unfortunately, the worst principals don't appear to leave education altogether; they merely resurface as leaders at other schools. To access the paper in its entirety, visit [http://www.caldercenter.org/upload/CALDER-Working-Paper-32\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.caldercenter.org/upload/CALDER-Working-Paper-32_FINAL.pdf).

■ For an article in *Kappan* magazine, authors Tracey and Abby Sparrow spoke with a number of black males ages 13 to 22 in Washington, D.C. and Milwaukee, WI to learn what they felt stands in the way of their success. The authors found the young men rarely talked about schools or teachers as the cause of the achievement gap, but instead attributed it to cultural, family, and community factors. All wanted and understood the importance of a good education. They also talked about the importance of cohesive families, attentive parents, and positive male role models, as well as the dangers of the rap culture, poverty, and low expectations. The men interviewed were clear that the challenge of educating black males is much bigger than the schoolhouse. As one interviewee remarked, success "starts at home... Many black kids don't have a sense of belonging, and "the streets accept anyone."

## SURVEY ON LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY BARRIERS REVEALS COMMON THEMES

By Dr. V. Everett Lyons  
CAS Assistant Executive Director

During a January 20, 2012 meeting with Connecticut Commissioner of Education, Stefan Pryor, a request was made to have the Connecticut Association of Schools survey its member principals concerning current legislative and state department of education regulations which impeded their work as instructional leaders. The association developed and promulgated an electronic survey of all members around this theme. While a variety of responses were received, the most prevalent number could be grouped around the following three main themes. The themes are ordered in terms of frequency of similar responses. A brief explanatory description expands upon each theme.

### 1. PA 11-232, *An Act Concerning School Bullying Laws*

While school leaders recognize and embrace the need for positive school climate, the expanded scope in the definition of bullying has required significant amounts of time to investigate numerous allegations and this use of time detracts from available time during the principals' work day to focus on instructional issues. The need for a school climate plan, along with identified personnel with specialized titles, has had similar results with respect to time usage as well as requiring principals to reallocate critical resources to meet this mandate. An ancillary issue is the lack of differentiation in the legislation recognizing those schools with demonstrated positive school climate, thus relieving them of the need to comply with the legislation.

### 2. PA 10-111, *An Act Concerning Educational Reform in Connecticut*

School leaders' concerns with this legislative mandate fall into two broad areas: (1) Confusion over the status of the secondary school reform initiative given the delay in implementation enacted in the last legislative session and the appearance of the CAPSS school reform platform which calls for an end to the Carnegie unit measure of high school graduation standards, and (2) the specific provision for Student Success Plans. Essentially, the principals' dilemma in the first point is that of "What do we do plan for?" Will the CSDE continue with plans to develop end-of-course assessments and will student be required to

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## PRINCIPALS DIALOGUE WITH EDUCATION COMMITTEE CO-CHAIR ANDREA STILLMAN

On February 17th, the CAS Legislation Committee hosted a discussion forum with State Senator Andrea Stillman, deputy majority leader and co-chair of the education committee. Approximately thirty principals from around the state traveled to the CAS office on a Friday afternoon to share their opinions with and ask questions of the democratic senator from Eastern Connecticut. Following introductions by CAS lobbyist Marshall Collins, Senator Stillman eagerly solicited principals' opinions on the Governor's recently unveiled education bill. "Principals will play a huge role in implementing the governor's proposed reforms. I need to hear your concerns," said Stillman.

In response, the principals in attendance raised a number of concerns, including:

- the focus on charter schools potentially at the expense of existing magnet schools;
- the financial burden of more unfunded mandates;
- the impact of regionalization requirements on small schools;
- the need for principal autonomy in order to effectively implement all the reforms being proposed; and,
- the importance of aligning new reforms with existing ones.



Senator Stillman (l) and CAS Executive Director Karissa Niehoff share a moment of levity amidst heavy legislative discussions



Among the principals in attendance were CAS President Kit Bishop, President-Elect Dave Russell, Board Member Kathi Walsh, CIAC Chair Bob Hale, Jr., CIAC Treasurer Steve Wysowski and National High School Principal of the Year Mike Foran.

## A COMPREHENSIVE EFFECTIVE TEACHING TEMPLATE FOR PLANNING, OBSERVING AND REFLECTING

By Dr. Suzi D'Annolfo, University of Hartford and  
Dr. Jeffrey Schumann, Deputy Superintendent,  
Newington Public Schools

Over the past several years, we have looked at ways to synthesize the plethora of evidence-based effective teaching strategies and incorporate them into a practical and efficient template that focuses on the instructional core and the adult actions that positively impact student learning. The template design is aligned to Connecticut Common Core of Teaching (CCCT) standards for teachers and has been used for lesson planning, a hiring protocol for rating demonstration lessons for teacher candidates, and a classroom observation instrument. The creation of this template was initially designed to serve as a living document to capture multiple data streams while observing demonstration lessons for perspective candidates as part of the hiring process in the Newington Public Schools. When it consistently helped to differentiate the actions of the candidates and their effect on student engagement and learning, it was recognized as a valuable tool to observe the instructional core, the connection among the student, teacher, and content.

As the document continued to evolve, its use has been expanded. As an observation and reflection tool for teachers and school leaders, it has been the stimulus to guide professional discourse around teaching and learning and promote the art and science of being a reflective practitioner. Most recently, it has been implemented in secondary methods courses at the University of Hartford to guide students' scaffolding of comprehensive lesson planning and the identification of effective teaching strategies, as well as to serve as a reference for teaching candidates to more purposefully observe and learn from experienced teachers in the classroom.

The current version of the template includes the Building Blocks for Student Engagement (BBSE) comprised of the Essential Question: what students need to know/remember, understand and do; Bloom's taxonomy; culturally responsive resources; high-yield instructional strategies; accommodations; differentiation; integration of 21st century skills; formative and summative assessments for progress monitoring; student engagement, culture and climate monitoring; professional dispositions and responsibilities. The two-page template can be accessed at [http://www.casciac.org/pdfs/teaching\\_template\\_dannolfo-schumann.pdf](http://www.casciac.org/pdfs/teaching_template_dannolfo-schumann.pdf). The authors welcome further inquiry and feedback via email contacts on the template.



### **Bullying, continued from page 1**

**Harassment** - An individual criminally harasses another person when, by telephone, he or she addresses another in or uses indecent or obscene language; or when with the intent to harass, annoy or alarm another person, he or she communicates with a person by telegraph or mail, by fax, by computer network, or by any other form of written communication, in a manner likely to cause annoyance or alarm; or with the intent to harass, annoy or alarm another person, he or she makes a telephone call, whether or not a conversation ensues, in a manner likely to cause annoyance or alarm. Conn. Gen. Stat. § 53a-183.

**Larceny** - A person commits larceny when, with the intent to deprive another of property or to appropriate the same to himself or a third person, he or she wrongfully takes, obtains or withholds such property from an owner. Conn. Gen. Stat. § 53a-119. If, during the course of committing a larceny, the individual uses or threatens the immediate use of physical force upon another person for the purpose of preventing or overcoming resistance to the larceny, the individual commits robbery. Conn. Gen. Stat. § 53a-133.

**Sexting/Child Pornography** - Possession of, or transmission of, any visual depiction of child pornography (any visual depiction of an individual under sixteen years of age engaging in sexually explicit conduct) is a crime. Conn. Gen. Stat. 53a-196h.

**Criminal Threats** - An individual commits criminal threatening when by physical threat, he or she intentionally places or attempts to place another in fear of imminent serious physical injury; when an individual threatens to commit a crime of violence with the intent to terrorize another person; or when an individual threatens to commit such a crime of violence in reckless disregard of the risk of causing such terror. Conn. Gen. Stat. § 53a-62.

The brief list of crimes provided here is in no way exhaustive. Nevertheless, if the bullying behavior could constitute one of the above crimes, it is appropriate to report it to the police. Of course, administrators should use their good judgment in exercising their discretion in reporting the conduct that they believe may constitute criminal conduct.

It is important to remember to start first by investigating reports of bullying to determine whether student conduct is bullying. If the conduct is a verified act of bullying, follow the steps and interventions required by the bullying law and your district's safe school climate plan. Finally, consider whether the behavior could constitute a crime, and if you believe it may, report it to the appropriate law enforcement agency for investigation. In particular cases, local police officials can be a good resource to help you make that determination. Finally, if you have questions about your reporting obligations under the bullying law, you may wish to seek legal counsel.

### **Joint press conference, continued from page 1**

a governor who has declared education reform to be a singular focus of his administration; and we have a commissioner who is reform-minded and results-driven. This is a time of opportunity, one which can generate positive energy and collaborative action."

To read the joint views of CAPSS, CAS, CABE, CBIA, CCER and ConnCan, visit [http://www.casciac.org/pdfs/joint\\_statement\\_final\\_feb\\_2012.pdf](http://www.casciac.org/pdfs/joint_statement_final_feb_2012.pdf).



Left to right: Louis Bach, CBIA; Patrick Riccards, ConnCan; Karissa Niehoff, CAS; Joseph Cirusuolo, CAPSS; Robert Rader, CABE; and RaeAnn Knopf, CCER

SAVE THE DATE!

## The 14th Annual CT Association of National Honor Societies' State Conference

# MONDAY, MAY 21, 2012

7:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.  
Hartford Marriott, Rocky Hill

This conference is designed for High School and Middle School National Honor Society Members, Faculty Council Members and Honor Society Advisors to come together to create enthusiasm for scholarship, stimulate a desire to render service locally and statewide, enhance and promote leadership skills and focus on student member character development.

Registration is now open!  
Visit [www.casciac.org](http://www.casciac.org) for more details!

## MEETING WITH COMMISSIONER PRYOR PROMPTS “PRINCIPALS’ PERSPECTIVE” DOCUMENT

On Friday, January 20th, a group of Connecticut principals had the opportunity to meet with Commissioner of Education, Stefan Pryor. The principals represented K-12 public, magnet and vocational schools in both urban and suburban settings. Following the meeting with Commissioner Pryor, the assembled principals united in their collective decision to offer the Commissioner a "Principals' Perspective" on their needs as school leaders.

The group of principals met again on Friday, January 27th to develop a document summarizing their thoughts. They chose to share their responses in themes that are organized around the Connecticut School Leadership Standards. Their responses are suggested actions for the State Department of Education to undertake. Our heartfelt thanks to the dedicated administrators whom we affectionately call "Pryor's Principals":

- Lynn Bennett-Wallick, Ansonia Middle School
- Sally Biggs, Hartford Magnet Trinity College Academy
- Kit Bishop, Daisy Ingraham School, Westbrook
- Kermit Carolina, James Hillhouse High School, New Haven

- William Chaffin, A.I. Prince Technical High School, Hartford
- Gail Dahling-Hench, Pine Grove Elementary School, Avon
- Lisa Eells, Gaffney Elementary School, New Britain
- Kate England, Nathan Hale School, Manchester
- Mike Foran, New Britain High School
- Gary Highsmith, Hamden High School
- Johnna Hunt, Hillside Intermediate School, Naugatuck
- Scott Leslie, RHAM High School, Hebron
- Madeline Negron, Windham Middle School
- Alejandro Ortiz, Bassick High School, Bridgeport
- Nate Quesnel, East Hartford Middle School
- Hector Sanchez, Cesar Batalla School, Bridgeport
- Donna Schilke, Smith Middle School, Glastonbury
- Beth Smith, Shelton High School
- Rosie Vojtek, Ivy Drive School, Bristol

The document, which does not stand as a legislative agenda or formal position statement, can be viewed at: [www.casciac.org/memberschools/PrincipalsPerspective.pdf](http://www.casciac.org/memberschools/PrincipalsPerspective.pdf).



CAS Staff and "Pryor's Principals" hard at work.

### Survey results, *continued from page 4*

meet additional Carnegie standards as projected in the current legislation? If so, secondary administrators want to begin planning now. If not, they do not want to plan for naught. Clarity is needed on this issue.

The issues around the Student Success Plans primarily include a concern over the lack of human and technological resources to meet the mandate in a number of schools. Also, some confusion exists regarding the need for special needs students with IEPs to

have Student Success Plans well. Could not the two be merged into the IEP document? Again, clarity on this point would be helpful.

### 3. Numerous Unfunded Mandates and Frequency of Reporting

Of equal weight were the dual, yet somewhat related, issues of unfunded mandates and reports required by the CSDE which often appear to ask for duplicate information. Greater coordination is needed to ensure that requirements are not so numerous as to prevent a deep and rich response. Principals report that they often feel as if

they simply are "putting out fires" and giving superficial treatment to the numerous disjointed mandates coming from the legislature and CSDE. One practitioner noted that he was attempting to lead his school in meeting the requirements of legislation concerning SRBI, School Governance Councils, Safe School Climate, Special Education, and No Child Left Behind while responding to numerous state reporting forms. Given the dearth of administrative resources, little time was left for instructional leadership.



## Student Success Plans - Burden or Blessing?

By Earle Bidwell, Assistant Executive Director

The list is long and somewhat dizzying: "2012 The Year for Educational Reform", No Child Left Behind waivers, Common Core Standards, new teacher and principal evaluations, legislation to support positive school climate and anti-bullying, SRBI, School Governance Councils, emphasis on preschool and primary education (age 3 to grade 3), and sweeping reorganization of the CT State Department of Education. These initiatives, and several others, are putting increasing demands on public school principals and teachers to work harder and produce better results with the same, or in many cases reduced, levels of support; a daunting task to be sure. Add to this the requirement that all but slipped under the radar, Student Success Plans for every student in grades 6-12. In the original secondary school reform legislation language, there would have been a gradual roll-out beginning with grade 6, but in the final iteration, it is for all secondary students in grades 6-12 beginning in July, 2012. This, according to a recent survey of CAS principals has raised the level of concern to third behind *An Act Concerning School Bullying Laws* and *An Act Concerning Educational Reform in CT*.

Given this workload, one might be tempted to simply delegate the SSP task to others (most likely counselors) or to do only the minimum to satisfy the law. From my viewpoint, this would be a mistake! I can think of no other intervention that would have a stronger positive impact on student learning than personalization of the schoolhouse and student engagement, the linchpins of well-executed student success plans.

In 1996, the National Association for Secondary School Principals published their seminal work, *Breaking Ranks*, followed by "Breaking Ranks in the Middle" in 2007, which called for a restructuring of the American secondary schools. According to their recommendations, "The [secondary] school of the 21st century must be much more student-centered and above all much more personalized in programs, support services, and intellectual rigor." These works gained prominence in response to two key developments: 1) calls for middle and high schools to become more personalized and student-centered in order to improve academic achievement, student engagement, and healthy youth development, particularly for students at risk of dropping out; and 2) the need to ensure that all students have access to an educational experience that builds the necessary academic, workforce and personal skills required for postsecondary success.

As a result of the "call for action" relative to personalization, 23 states and the District of Columbia adopted legislation or statewide mandates relative to learning plans for secondary students and there is legislation pending in three others. Connecticut is one of three states where the plans begin in grade 6.

While the move toward learning plans is relatively new, there is emerging evidence that they have a positive impact on student success. According to a policy brief published by the Rennie Center for Educational Research and Policy entitled *Student Learning Plans: Supporting Every Student's Transition to College and Career* "learning plans have been linked to a variety of developmental outcomes, including improved academic motivation, engagement, decision-making and personal accountability-characteristics that are increasingly seen as essential for success in postsecondary education and work." A review of the research conducted by the Rennie Center revealed that "... there is a growing body of research on the impact of SLPs [generic term for SSPs] on other student outcomes, such as motivation and engagement, goal setting, long-term planning, increased awareness of career options, and parental involvement in academic and career decisions."<sup>1</sup>

A strong link to personalization comes from two respected sources, The New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) and the Association for Middle Level Education (AMLE, formerly NMSA). The NEASC standards include... "a formal, ongoing program through which each student has an adult in the school, in addition to the school counselor, who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations."<sup>2</sup> To accomplish this, many Connecticut high schools have adopted advisory programs that include all certified adults, and in some cases support staff, to create a better student-adult ratio. The middle level evidence to support advisory comes from a study of 101 of the country's most successful middle schools and a random sample of 827 other middle schools conducted by noted middle school researcher, Ken McEwin. Among findings that support the middle school concept, McEwin discovered that successful middle schools more frequently had advisory programs (65% to 54%) than the less successful schools.<sup>3</sup>

Given the evidence, it behooves administrators and teachers, whose goal is always to promote "success for all students" to support personal-

ization; where every teacher is responsible for advising a small group of students, and each student has a caring adult who will oversee his/her academic, career and personal growth for the years s/he is in a school. Schools would do well to mirror the efforts of schools like those in Regional District 14 who list the following as Keys to Student Engagement.

An individualized flexible student-driven plan:

- helps every student stay connected in school
- helps students achieve post-secondary education and career goals
- begins in 6th grade and continues through high school and beyond
- establishes an adult support team which may include teachers, counselors, school psychologists, social workers, parents/guardians, community members, etc.
- provides student support in setting goals for personal and academic growth
- explores education, interests and career paths
- provides a vehicle for integration and demonstration of 21st century skills
- utilizes an electronic system for efficiency and portability.

This plan and the plans from several other schools who have presented at CAS sponsored Student Success Plans Symposia can be viewed on the CAS website under Student Success Plan Resource. CAS will also be sponsoring additional sessions early in May to assist school teams in linking engagement and advisory to student success. Registration information will be on the CAS website this month.

While there are those who may see this as just one more thing to add to their already full plate, many successful schools are considering this as a way to link and combine many efforts already underway in their schools to ensure student success. Burden or Blessing? I suppose it all depends on one's lens, yet there appear to be many benefits to reap with successful implementation.

1 Our review of research findings related to SLPs is consistent with previous analyses, including: Education Commission of the States. (2007). *State Notes: Additional high school graduation requirements and options*; Regional Education Laboratory, Northeast & Islands. (2008). *Personal Learning Plans (PLPs)*. REL Reference Desk; National High School Center. (2010). *What is the research base of individual learning plans at the high school level and its impact on student outcomes? Are there studies documenting the impact of Individual Learning Plans on student outcomes?* Retrieved from: [www.betterhighschools.org/topics/documents/TAResponseQ3.pdf](http://www.betterhighschools.org/topics/documents/TAResponseQ3.pdf).

2 [http://cpss.neasc.org/downloads/2011\\_Standards/2011\\_Standards.pdf](http://cpss.neasc.org/downloads/2011_Standards/2011_Standards.pdf)

3 [www.amlle.org/Research/ResearchfromtheField/tabid/1642/Default.aspx](http://www.amlle.org/Research/ResearchfromtheField/tabid/1642/Default.aspx)



## GRYNN & BARRETT PHOTOGRAPHY COMPLETES SUCCESSFUL MERGER AND NAME CHANGE



Left to right: Chris Grenier, Bill Aninowsky Jr., and Dan Grenier

For 5 years and counting, Grynn & Barrett has provided the Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS) with quality images and service as its exclusive photographer. This past year, Grynn & Barrett joined forces with industry leader BNL Enterprises and is doing business as G&B Photography. G&B has been a long time sponsor, supporter and partner of CAS. The combination of G&B with BNL Enterprises will enhance G&B's mission to provide self-esteem, open doors to new avenues of photography and provide a united front from photography to product. G&B is unique in the photography industry because they are comprised of 2 families, the Aninowsky's (Bill Jr. and Bill Sr.) and the Grenier's (Chris and Dan). Both organizations are family owned and operated, bringing over 75 years of industry success providing schools with a different approach to the school picture experience throughout the Northeast.

The heart of their business is driven by creating confidence in children. "When we think of school pictures, we think self-esteem," said Chris Grenier. "How is the child going to view themselves in the photo? What is Mom or Dad going to feel when they see the photos? This is first on our mind before we snap the picture." With this approach, the end results are more than a picture, they are moments that everyone will remember.

G&B continues to gain new schools and school districts for the opportunity to share their business approach. "Everything needs to be a positive experience," said Bill Jr. He explained that picture day used to be a hassle for some schools before G&B introduced their stream-lined process of making the day fun for everyone - students, faculty, and administration. School pictures are an American tradition that sparks emotions in all of us. With G&B, these emotions are positive ones.

In addition to the partnership with G&B, BNL owns Jelly Jar Photography, which serves over 350 preschool/day-care providers in New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania. This merger provides G&B access to an even larger combination of highly

*continued on page 12*

## ciac news

### CONNECTICUT GOLFER RECEIVES NFHS SPIRIT OF SPORT AWARD

INDIANAPOLIS, IN - **James Burgoyne**, a golfer at Darien High School, has been selected as the 2012 Section 1 recipient of the "National High School Spirit of Sport Award" by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS). The National High School Spirit of Sport Award was created by the NFHS to recognize those individuals who exemplify the ideals of the spirit of sport that represent the core mission of education-based athletics.

At Darien High School, Burgoyne has been a four-year varsity golf team member, capped by being selected captain his senior year. He has placed highly in several metropolitan PGA golf tournaments during that time. Burgoyne has been equally outstanding in the classroom, where he has maintained a 3.91 grade-point average. A member of the National Honor Society, Burgoyne takes several AP and honors courses, and he scored a 2,200 on his SAT.

While embodying the ideals of exemplary athletic and academic achievement is outstanding in and of itself, what has really set Burgoyne apart from the crowd is a volunteer program that he developed as a mere sophomore. At that time, Burgoyne wanted to do something to support America's troops overseas and their families stateside. He became aware of the PGA's "Birdies for the Brave" program in which sponsors donate a certain amount of money per birdie made, and he approached Darien High School golf coach Tom O'Donnell to see if there might be a way in which the golf team could become involved with it.

"I was immediately struck by two things," O'Donnell said. "First, this is a great idea, and second, what an impressive and mature young man to show such empathy, gratitude and initiative. As a direct result of his efforts, \$3,500 was raised and donated to the program on behalf of the Darien High School golf team.

"That alone would have been significant, but while communicating with the PGA Tour on the project, I discovered that Darien High School was the first high school in the country to be involved with the program. As a result of our success, the PGA Tour decided to initiate a 'Birdies for the Brave Golf Team Pledge Program,' and now other teams are starting to get involved.

"Utilizing sports to help others is one of the most positive values of athletics and James Burgoyne has helped remind us of that. In addition, he has also reminded us that charitable work in sports is not the sole responsibility of the professional leagues and that each of us can use the love of sports to make a positive impact on the lives of others. James Burgoyne started all of this in motion, but there is no telling where it will end or how many people will be helped because one athlete used his love of sport to show his gratitude and appreciation to those who provide the safety and security he enjoys."

The NFHS divides the nation into eight geographical sections. The states in Section 1 are CT, ME, NH, VT, NY, NJ, RI and MA. Nominations for this award were generated through NFHS member state associations and reviewed by the NFHS Spirit of Sport Award Selection Committee composed of state association staff members.

## ... more ciac news



Photo by the Fairfield Citizen

### COACH MARTY ROOS ACHIEVES NATIONAL RANKING

Marty Roos, longtime coach at Notre Dame Fairfield High School, recently retired as the state's winningest ice hockey coach. The 76-year-old Roos, who compiled a 536-301-19 win-loss record and led teams to six state titles during his 40-year career, announced his retirement nine games into the season with a press release. He had also coached at Fairfield Prep High School. According to the National Federation of State High School Associations' National High School Sports Record Book, Roos ranks eighth all-time nationally in career victories.

### NFHS ADOPTS FOOTBALL RULES CHANGES

#### New loss of helmet rule aims to stem concussion injuries

Last month, the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) announced a rule change that requires high school football players to leave the field for at least one down if their helmet comes off during a play. The change does not apply to players who lose their helmet as a direct result of a foul from an opponent, however.

"The committee made this rules change after reviewing data from multiple states regarding the frequency of helmets coming off during live-ball play," said Julian Tackett, the commissioner of the Kentucky High School Athletic Association and chair of the NFHS football rules committee, in a statement. "It is the committee's hope that this serves notice for schools to properly fit players with helmets to reduce the incidence of these situations and remind the players not to take steps that alter the fit."

This addition to Rule 3-5-10 was one of eight rules changes approved by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Football Rules Committee at its January 20-22 meeting in Indianapolis. All rules changes were subsequently approved by the NFHS Board of Directors.

The new helmet rule wasn't the only notable change for high school football programs. Another new policy, Rule 1-2-31, will now allow schools to open their football fields to corporate advertisements, so long as the ads don't block the yard lines, hash marks, or nine-yard marks on the field. Previously, schools could only display advertisements in the end zones and outside the field.

Nationwide, high school athletes suffer concussions at a rate of 2.5 for every 10,000 exposures to the playing field, either for practice or competition, says a recent study in *The American Journal of Sports Medicine*. Of the 1,936 concussions examined, nearly half—47.1 percent—stemmed from football.

Dr. Joseph S. Torg, a clinical professor of orthopaedic surgery and sports medicine at Temple University, in Philadelphia, and his colleagues examined data from 1,006 concussions and found that youth-football players wearing properly fitted helmets, as reported by certified athletic trainers, were 80 percent less likely to lose consciousness when sustaining large, concussive hits to the head. "As we look at preventing concussions and minimizing risk, it is important to realize that it is the responsibility of the athletic director and head football coach to have policies that: Insure that each player has a properly fitted helmet and that a responsible adult supervises and oversees proper helmet air bladder inflation on a weekly basis," said Torg.

(Source: "Schooled in Sports," [www.edweek.org](http://www.edweek.org), 2/28/12)

### Kentucky Appeals Court Ruling Upholds Limit on Athlete Scholarships

A federal appeals court upheld a Kentucky rule last week that prevents private school student-athletes from receiving merit-based scholarships that cover more than 25 percent of the cost of their tuition, dismissing claims about the rule's unconstitutionality.

Four parents of private school students filed suit against the Kentucky High School Athletic Association in 2009, alleging that Bylaw 13 forces students to choose between participating in school sports and getting financial assistance.

In the ruling, filed Dec. 21, the U.S. 6th Circuit Court of Appeals wrote that the rule "only restricts the amount and type of financial aid that a student can receive and retain KHSAA athletic eligibility." "The fundamental right of parents to control the education of their children does not extend to a right to demand that their children be allowed to participate without restrictions in extracurricular sports," the court ruled.

The court's decision upholds an earlier ruling by the U.S. District Court of Western Kentucky. By the KHSAA's definition, merit-based scholarships are based solely on academic or test performance and are available to the entire student body. Factoring in athletic ability with scholarships is strictly prohibited.

Julian Tackett, commissioner of the KHSAA, told *The Courier-Journal* that the rules were put in place before the start of the 2007-08 school year to "help address perception issues" and to ensure that private schools weren't effectively paying recruits to attend.

There is no limit on need-based aid for student-athletes, under KHSAA rules. The 25 percent tuition cap strictly applies to merit-based scholarships.

(From "Court Upholds Limit on Merit-Based Scholarships for Ky. Athletes" By Bryan Toporek, [edweek.org](http://edweek.org), December 29, 2011)



. . . more ciac news

## Sports News & Notes

■ In the case of *Ollier v. Sweetwater High School District*, a federal district court in California has ruled that a school district violated the Title IX rights of a class of female student-athletes because of the unequal treatment and benefits afforded the girls' softball program in comparison to those afforded the boys' baseball program. The court also found that the school district was liable for retaliation under Title IX for firing the girls' softball coach, who had complained about the unequal facilities. The court ordered the parties jointly to prepare a proposed compliance plan to include the court's continuing jurisdiction and monitoring of the school district's athletic programs and activities. (See related item [this page](#))

■ The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is developing national concussion guidelines for school sports, to be released by fall 2013. A panel of experts across the country will offer advice to help states implement standard protocol for the prevention and treatment of concussions sustained in school-related activities. The guidelines will not be mandatory, but only recommendations for schools and districts working to implement youth concussion laws. At a minimum, they will include the three provisions of Washington state's Zachary Lystedt Law—used by the National Football League—to promote a model concussion policy across the country. The law requires a student-athlete's parent or guardian to sign a concussion-awareness form before he or she can participate in any sports-related activity; removes a student from play who is suspected of sustaining a concussion; and requires a student-athlete removed from play to obtain medical clearance before returning. The majority of states that have already adopted youth sport concussion laws require mandatory training for coaches and a few also provide training for school nurses, athletic trainers, and other staff. Source: EdWeek.org (9/27/11)

■ The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS), which has written and published playing rules for high school sports throughout its 93-year history, has released its first rules application for mobile devices. The 2011-12 NFHS Basketball Rules Application (App), which is now available in the Android Market, combines the 2011-12 NFHS Basketball Rules Book and the 2011-12 NFHS Basketball Case Book into one searchable mobile app. The material is cross-referenced to display related content, and is offered as a companion piece to the printed books. Developed in partnership with Arbitersports, the 2011-12 NFHS Basketball Rules App is available at this time for Android devices only; however, the iPhone/iPad version will be released soon. In addition, apps for NFHS rules in other sports will be coming later this year.

### What is the #1 reason students don't report hazing to adults?

According to a seminal study conducted by Alfred University in 2000, 36% of students surveyed said that they would not report hazing primarily because "There's no one to tell." Secondly, they said that, "Adults won't handle it right." (27%)

The study also found that:

- 48 percent of students who belong to groups reported being subjected to hazing activities.
- 43 percent reported being subjected to humiliating activities.
- 30 percent reported performing potentially illegal acts as part of their initiation.
- 71 percent of the students subjected to hazing reported negative consequences, such as getting into fights, being injured, fighting with parents, doing poorly in school, hurting other people, having difficulty eating, sleeping, or concentrating, or feeling angry, confused, embarrassed or guilty.

## 2011 SAW PROLIFERATION OF TITLE IX SUITS IN HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETICS

Since the late fall of 2010, 210 school districts encompassing more than 525 high schools have been named in Title IX complaints filed with the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) claiming that the targeted districts and schools are failing to provide girls with sports participation opportunities equivalent to those provided to boys. In November of 2010, the National Women's Law Center (NWLC) filed Title IX complaints with the OCR against 12 school districts across the country composed of more than 200 high schools. During the first three months of 2011, complaints were filed against 60 districts in Washington state consisting of more than 125 high schools, filings for which the OCR declined to identify the complainants. In April of 2011, complaints were filed against 60 districts in Oregon composed of more than 100 high schools, also by unidentified complainants. And in June of 2011, complaints were filed against 78 districts in Idaho encompassing more than 100 high schools, likewise through filings by unidentified complainants.

What lessons are to be learned from the explosion of such lawsuits? Lee Green, attorney and professor at Baker University in Kansas, offers the following advice.

Historically, most Title IX complaints were filed by student-athletes, parents or coaches based on sports disparities between girls and boys related to what the OCR designates as "the other athletic benefits and opportunities that accompany sports participation" – a category that includes items such as equipment, uniforms, facilities, locker rooms, quality of coaching, travel, scheduling of practices and contests, and other program resources. Typically, numerical participation gaps were not the factor that initially created a perception of inequity by student-athletes, parents or coaches and led to the filing of a Title IX complaint.

Recently, however, a trend has emerged in which advocacy groups are filing mass complaints against large numbers of districts and schools based solely on numerical participation analysis and, therefore, it is imperative that school administrators have a thorough understanding of the three-prong test (which provides three alternative methods by which an institution may demonstrate that it provides sports participation opportunities for girls equivalent to those provided to boys), annually conduct self-audits of their schools to monitor all three-prong test issues, and take any corrective measures necessary to add meaningful and legally acceptable sports participation opportunities for girls. Only through the use of such proactive strategies can a school minimize the risk of being included in a mass filing of Title IX complaints by an advocacy group.

(Excerpted from an article by Attorney Lee Green published in *High School Today*, September 2011)

**Grynn & Barrett, continued from page 9**

qualified photographers and training tools to expand into this new market. G&B plans to introduce this new product line into New England in 2012.

From photography to product, customers will have a smooth experience with the merging of these two companies. BNL operates a 20,000 square foot manufacturing facility that produces over 1 million portraits per year.

Together they will service some of the largest independent photographers in the country and deliver state of the art package printing and e-commerce solutions. G&B's complete vertical integration with the BNL Enterprise's lab facility translates to faster and more consistent delivery times, higher quality response to customer inquiries and a more competitive product line. "There is something here for everyone" says Dan Grenier. "We worked the most popular add-on products into packages so parents can get what they want and save money too."

The combination of G&B Photography with BNL Enterprises brings together two highly respected families and photography companies who have contributed over 20 million dollars in fundraising and school services over their years of business. G&B's merger will expand capabilities in product line and services while maintaining the same high level of customer satisfaction. There is a better way for picture day and CAS is proud to recommend G&B for any of your school picture needs. For more information on G&B Photography and to book a shoot for your school or business ,visit their website at [www.gandbphotography.com](http://www.gandbphotography.com) or call Chris at 800-639-2104 ext. 3627.

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