

# ACADEMIC OFFICE NEWS

December 2017



The Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) Academic Office provides guidance and leadership on educational initiatives to assist schools and districts in preparing students to succeed in college, careers, and civic life. *Helpful updates, resources and professional learning are highlighted in this newsletter.*

## PLAYWRIGHTS FOR TOMORROW

**Exciting Opportunity for High School Students:** Artful Living is a 501c3 Community Theater organization dedicated to education and community building. The mission of [Artful Living's Playwrights for Tomorrow](#) is to give Connecticut youth an opportunity for artistic expression through reading and producing their original short plays and empowering their art through validation and potential scholarship awards. Up to three (3) playwrights will be chosen to win \$500 scholarships. Three (3) or more may be selected to do staged readings on April 29, 2018, at the Katherine Hepburn Cultural Arts Center in Old Saybrook, Connecticut (CT). Original plays should be written in Standard Script Format and submitted electronically NO LATER THAN January 8, 2018. Application and helpful hints are posted to the [Artful Living Web site](#). For more information, contact Chris Solimene at 860-389-1363.

## DISTRICT LITERACY SCAN

**Free District Literacy Tool:** The District Literacy Scan is a newly created, free on-line resource districts can use to self-assess literacy practices and make strategic plans to address those findings. The District Literacy Scan contains numerous resources and examples to help districts improve their literacy practices. The scan can be accessed on any Internet-enabled device and the data submitted is confidential with results accessed by only the superintendent of schools or a designee. Data is not saved or collected by the Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS) who is hosting the site.

Funded by The Grossman Family Foundation, the District Literacy Scan was developed through a collaboration by the CAS, Literacy How, HILL for Literacy, and the Connecticut Council for Education Reform. (CCER). You can learn more about the District Literacy Scan and access it at [literacyscan.org](http://literacyscan.org).

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## PROFESSIONAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

**English Learners (ELs):** The CSDE, in collaboration with ACES, the RESC Alliance, and the CAS, is excited to roll-out a robust professional learning program targeted to support school and district personnel including general educators, TESOL and bilingual teachers, special educators, ESL tutors, building- and district-level administrators. An additional component to the professional learning initiative will be the collaborative revision and updating of resource guides and manuals pertaining to EL policies and best practices.

**Connecticut Core Standards Online Learning Modules:** The CSDE, in collaboration with Public Consulting Group, Inc. (PCG), is pleased to continue offering anytime, anywhere access to professional learning content focusing on the Connecticut Core Standards. Current modules available include Focus on Content Standards (K-5 & 6-12), Focus on Practice Standards (K-5 & 6-12), Focus on Instructional Shifts in ELA, Focus on ELA and Literacy Instruction, Supporting CT Core Standards Success for ALL Students, CCS Mathematics Success for Students with Disabilities (ELA and Math), and CCS Mathematics Success for English Learners (ELA and Math). To register, visit [Connecticut Core Standards](#).

**Computer Science:** The Connecticut Chapter of the Computer Science Teachers Association (CTCSTA), with support from the CSDE, is proud to announce the [CS4CT Summit](#) being held on March 16, 2018, at the Cromwell Radisson. This event is intended to improve K-12 Computer Science Education within the classroom, school or district. Participants will learn how K-12 Computer Science Education is being advanced with the state and nation. To register, visit [CTCSTA](#).

**Mathematics:** Last year over 100 educators were trained on the Instructional Materials Evaluation Tool (IMET). This training and all related materials has been posted and is freely available to all educators. To access the training visit [CTCoreStandards](#).

**MSP Showcase Presentations:** The Mathematics and Science Partnerships (MSP) Grant is designed to support partnerships among state education agencies, local school districts and institutions of higher education to improve student achievement in mathematics and science through sustained professional development programs that enhance teachers' content knowledge and teaching practices. A showcase that highlighted the projects that have been funded with this grant in CT, as well as other professional learning opportunities in the areas of science, mathematics, and computer science was held in September. All of the materials from the various presentations have been posted on the [CTCoreStandards](#) website.

**Using Music in the Social Studies Classroom:** Stephen Armstrong, CSDE social studies consultant, is looking for teachers to share curriculum and lesson ideas on how to use music in the social studies classroom. The goals are to create a specific page on the CSDE web site giving social studies teachers ideas on how to incorporate music in the classroom. Please send the names of interested

## FREE! NGSS PROFESSIONAL LEARNING & RESOURCES

### Professional Learning

- [Next Generation Science- CT Short Course](#): Eleven self-paced modules offering up to 60 hours of structured professional learning.
- [Transitioning to NGSS: A Video Collection](#): A collection of videos showing CT educators teaching three-dimensional NGSS lessons in several classroom settings.
- [Curriculum Unit Development Institute \(CUDI\)](#): This five-day workshop is offered through the CT RESC system and will equip participants with the skills and tools needed to develop three-dimensional units.
- [PLANS - Principals Learn About, Network, and Support 3-Dimensional Science Learning](#): An awareness professional learning designed for Administrators/Evaluators and occurs in 1.5 days.
- [Why NGSS?](#): A two-day NGSS Awareness professional learning experience

### Resources

- Free online Access to [JASON](#) Programs for Public School Educators and Students in Connecticut through 2018
- Connecticut Invention Convention (CIC) is a nonprofit educational program designed to develop and enhance problem solving and critical thinking skills in children through the process of invention. For more information, visit [CIC](#).

## RECOGNITION OPPORTUNITIES

### Teachers

#### **Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST):**

PAEMST is the highest honor bestowed by the United States government specifically for K-12 mathematics and science teaching. Anyone—principals, teachers, parents, students, or members of the general public—may nominate exceptional mathematics, computer science, or science teachers currently teaching grades K-6. Nominations for the 2017-18 year opening soon and teachers may also apply directly at [www.paemst.org](http://www.paemst.org).

### Schools

**Red, White, and Blue Schools Program:** The CSDE and the Office of the Secretary of the State of Connecticut is co-sponsoring the [Red, White and Blue Schools](#) program. This program is designed to recognize schools who do an exemplary job of teaching civic education. The theme for the 2017-18 school year is *Engagement at the Local Level*. For additional information contact Stephen Armstrong, at [Stephen.Armstrong@ct.gov](mailto:Stephen.Armstrong@ct.gov).

**Remembering Our Heroes - Teaching about Veterans:** The CSDE, in consultation with the Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs, has established a [recognition program](#) for schools that do an exemplary job of teaching about veterans and their contributions to American society. This program encourages schools to work closely with local veterans' organizations to teach about the contributions of veterans throughout the school year. It is designed for elementary school, middle school, and high school students and teachers. For additional information contact Stephen Armstrong at [Stephen.Armstrong@ct.gov](mailto:Stephen.Armstrong@ct.gov).