

Making *a* Difference

CONNECTICUT'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS 2004-2005

The Rewards Of Education: Priceless!



Commissioner of Education
Betty J. Sternberg

"Priceless."

This is the "punch line" of one of the most successful advertising campaigns of recent years. We have all seen the ads: The first item might cost \$15, the next \$142, the third \$350. The final, wonderfully intangible item is simply priceless.

These ads always make me think about the many priceless moments I have had over the years in education. Especially the early years, when — as a K-8 mathematics resource teacher in San Jose, California — I would get down on the floor with young children and use games and concrete,

manipulative materials to help them understand math concepts.

I will never forget a third grader named José. José's teacher asked me to spend some time with him because he couldn't "get" the concept of expanded notation (that, for example, 342 is $300 + 40 + 2$). We spent awhile together working with base ten blocks — it was difficult for him and he was "blocking" — and all of a sudden I could see the "light bulb" turn on: There was such a bright, unmistakable expression of "I get it!" all over his face. After that experience, José always greeted me with a big smile and a wave and "Hi, Mrs. Sternberg!" That day had had such a positive effect on him.

On *him!* Here I am, 32 years later, and I can't forget that excited little face with his dancing, bright, black, thankful eyes.

Teachers at all levels have priceless moments like this all the time. Yes, they work very hard — and Connecticut has particularly high standards for its

teachers — but the intangible rewards are significant. And while we pay our teachers well, the intangible rewards of the profession are what really count — are what really attract those special people who are passionate about and committed to our children.

Helping José understand expanded notation was important. Letting him know I cared about him enough to spend special time with him was more important. Teaching student skills in all the subject areas is important.

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★ INSIDE: ★

High student achievement at Amistad Academy earns national attention.

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Closing gaps while raising achievement for all students are goals of CMT and CAPT.

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Metropolitan Learning Center emphasizes global approach.

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**Simpson-Waverly School:
A story of transformation.**

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Fall Publication Features New Content Focus

The newspaper you hold in your hands has a very different look and feel from the others that have come before in this annual series.

This year, we chose to focus on exemplary schools, programs and individuals whose contributions to teaching and supporting our young people have gone "above and beyond the call of duty" — and yielded special results.

We wanted to share with you the good news about a charter school, a magnet school, a city school, a rural school and a family resource center that do terrific things for kids. We wanted you to know about a first-year teacher serving as a role model and a retired teacher still serving as a mentor.

There are stories here about important matters such as the Connecticut Mastery Test and the Connecticut Academic Performance Test, but the emphasis truly is on what makes education the extraordinary experience it is: magical human connections.

We hope you enjoy the experience of reading *Making a Difference*.

CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Test Goals: Closing Gaps, Improving Achievement

Connecticut has a long history of student testing — the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) in Grades 4, 6 and 8 since the mid-1980s and the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) in Grade 10 since the mid-1990s — and a straightforward philosophy about its purposes. Our goal is to test what is important, reasonable and challenging for all students to know and be able to do. We want to know how our students are doing in very specific ways so we can change curriculum and instruction to help them improve where they need to improve.

Connecticut does not believe that any single test — or any other single evaluative tool — should be used to make any key decision about a student's educational life, from promotion to graduation. A full range of information, including local and classroom tests, student portfolios, teacher observations and other measures should be considered when making these decisions.

For any given student, the scores on the CMT and CAPT serve as an indicator of what he or she knows and is able to do in reading, writing and math (and science on the CAPT). If it indicates a possible problem, it warrants further diagnosis by other assessment tools available to teachers.

Detailed reports of student performance are reported at the state, district, school, classroom and individual levels. In other words, we can say how well all Connecticut public school sixth graders, on average, have mastered fractions, and we can say how well every individual sixth grader has mastered fractions. Parents receive detailed reports on the results of their child's tests. Districts and schools can, and do, change their curriculum and instruction based on what the CMT and CAPT reports tell them; instruction can even be customized for individual students.

Statewide results broken down by subgroups (for example, racial and ethnic groups, gender, disabled and nondisabled students, and economic background) give us important information about achievement gaps between these groups of students. Achievement gaps between white and African-American and white and Hispanic students have long been a serious concern. So, too, have been the gaps in achievement between students with and without disabilities, those who are learning English and those who are native speakers, and students who are and are not poor. In some subject areas, there are also performance gaps between male and female students.

Connecticut's greatest and most important challenge is to close these gaps while raising achievement for all students. The results of the most recent (2003) Connecticut Mastery Test show that in Grades 4, 6 and 8 the gaps are, in fact, beginning to close, while achievement is increasing at all levels. The 2004 CAPT results

show increasing performance across the board, but some increases in the gaps, as well.

Connecticut Mastery Test

According to the 2003 CMT results in all three grades, the achievement gaps between students in Connecticut's wealthiest and poorest communities are beginning to narrow. While performance in our poorest cities (Education Reference Group I, consisting of Bridgeport, Hartford, New Britain, New Haven, New London, Waterbury and Windham) is still low, it is

improving, particularly when compared to towns that have advantages (the rest of the state, ERGs A-H).

Performance in Grade 8 mathematics provides a good example of this trend. In 2000, 82.8

percent of students in ERGs A-H achieved proficiency on the mathematics test; in 2003, 83.1 percent did, for an increase of 0.3 percentage points. In ERG I over the same four years, the

increase in the percentage of students scoring

proficient range was from 41.4 to 45.5 or 4.1 percentage points. Thus, the gap in performance on the Grade 8 mathematics test closed by 3.8 percentage points.

There were comparable reductions in gaps of 3.9 percentage points in reading and 2.1 in writing in Grade 8 from 2000 to 2003 in the percentage of students reaching proficiency. In Grade 6, there were reductions in the gaps of 2.0, 0.3 and 0.5 percentage points in mathematics, reading and writing, respectively. In Grade 4, the gap reductions were 2.7, 3.7 and 0.5 percentage points, respectively.

Commissioner of Education Dr. Betty J. Sternberg views these results positively. "Our most important educational goal is to close the achievement gaps between subgroups of students," she said. "We are excited to see the fruits of efforts that have already been made. ERG I students in each grade and subject area became proficient at greater rates than their counterparts in ERGs A-H. However, this improvement is just the beginning," Dr. Sternberg added. "We have a long way to go before the gaps close significantly, so we need to continue our focus on this goal."

Statewide, from 2002 to 2003, Grade 6 CMT mathematics performance (percentage of students at or above state goal, one level above the proficiency level) increased from 61.1 to 62.0 percent; in Grade 8, the increase was from 56.1 percent to 56.3 percent. There were increases in all grades in writing performance: in Grade 4, from 61.5 to 65.8 percent; in Grade 6, from 60.8 to 62.2 percent; and in Grade 8 from 60.0 to 61.8 percent. There were decreases in the statewide percentages reaching state goal in Grade 4 mathematics and reading in all three grades.

Notably higher percentages of students in ERG I took the CMT than ever before. A comparison of data from 2000 to 2003 shows increases in participation in all nine tests, up to 13.1 percentage points (Grade 8 mathematics). Overall, approximately 10 percent more Grade 4 students, 11 percent more Grade 6 students and 12.5 percent more Grade 8 students took the CMT in 2003 than in 2000.

There were significant increases in the number of students taking the test (participation rate) for all key subgroups of students (students receiving special education services, English language learners, students receiving free or reduced-price lunches [an economic indicator] and African-American and Hispanic students). In addition, there was improvement in writing performance statewide in all grades and subgroups of students except special education students in Grades 6 and 8.

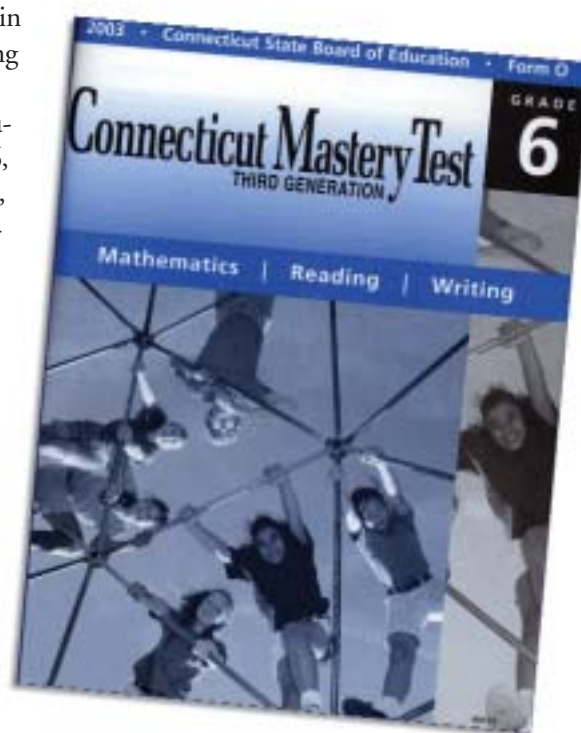
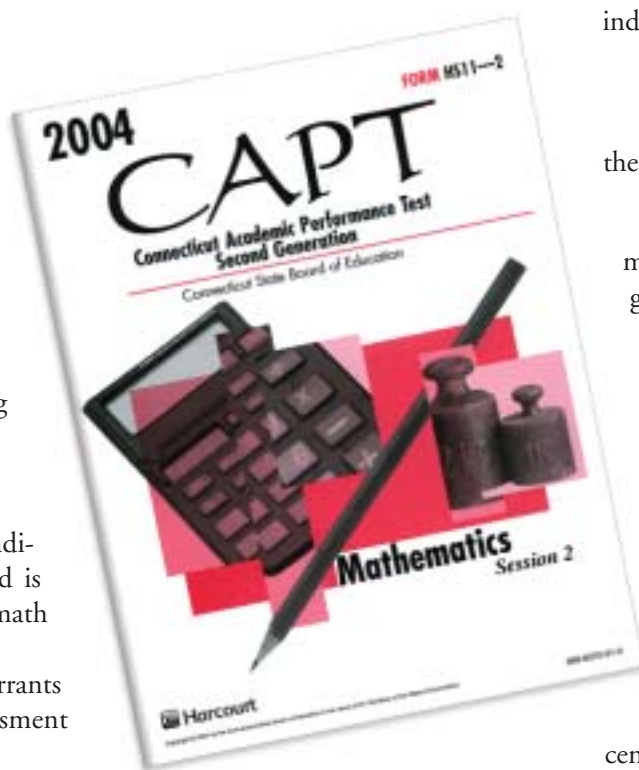
"The fact that higher — in some cases dramatically higher — percentages of students in certain subgroups are taking the CMT is critical," said Commissioner Sternberg. "When we expect students to take the test, it means we expect them to be able to meet the standards represented by the test. When we don't, it means we think there is no hope for them to achieve. That is unacceptable."

"The year-to-year (2002-03) data and trend (2000-03) data show that we have enforced our expectations of all students, regardless of their socioeconomic status, racial/ethnic designation or disability," Dr. Sternberg continued. "This is the first step toward closing the achievement gaps, and it is an important one."

For example, in Grade 4, the participation rate of English language learners increased from 46.1 to 92.9 percent on the mathematics test from 2000 to

2003 (the rate was 76.6 percent in 2002). In reading, from 2000 to 2002 to 2003 the percentage rose from 44.3 to 76.0 to 89.6; in writing, participation for this group increased from 43.7 to 73.1 to 84.0.

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CAPT Results Better in All Four Categories

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In general, higher percentages of test takers mean lower scores; however, this is the case in only four of the nine CMT test areas from 2002 to 2003. "It is very important that in some areas — but not enough — our students have defied the 'expectation' of lower scores with higher participation rates," Dr. Sternberg said.

Special Note on Writing Performance

Connecticut students continued their strong performance in writing. For example, in Grade 4, the percentage of students performing at or above the state goal in writing increased for all key subgroups from 2000 to 2002 and again to 2003 (students receiving special education services, English language learners, students receiving free or reduced-price lunches, African American and Hispanic students).

Students' success on the CMT writing assessment isn't surprising. On the last National Assessment of Educational Progress (2002), Connecticut students in Grades 4 and 8 (the two grades tested) scored first in the nation. All subgroups whose results were broken out (white, black, Hispanic, female, male, eligible and not eligible for free and reduced-price lunches) also outscored subgroups across the country.

Why this success in writing? "Connecticut districts and schools are offering a more consistent approach to the teaching of writing," Commissioner Sternberg said. "This includes writing for many purposes and audiences, and providing students and parents with tools to help them evaluate students' writing — to understand what is going to be measured; to understand what good writing is."

Connecticut Academic Performance Test

Results of the 2004 Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) in Grade 10 show increases in student academic performance in all four subject areas. The percentage of students scoring at the goal level or above increased from 43.2 to 47.4 percent in science; from 45.1 to 46.1 percent in mathematics; from 47.0 to 48.0 percent in Reading Across the Disciplines; and from 52.8 to 53.7 percent in Writing Across the Disciplines.

*"Connecticut districts
and schools are offering a more
consistent approach
to the teaching of writing."*

— Commissioner Betty J. Sternberg

Care for Children Requires Lots of Giving

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Being caring, responsive and supportive adults is more important. Teaching character — honesty, integrity, kindness, citizenship — by example is most important. The ability to have this kind of effect on our youngsters is absolutely priceless.

But priceless experiences having to do with young people and their learning aren't limited to professional educators. Those of us who are "in the business" often say that parents and families are a child's first and most effective teachers, and it's true — what happens at home and the support families give their young children is critical. And the intangible rewards of spending time with a child reading, going over homework or talking about what's happening at school are — of course — priceless.

Community members can enjoy these rewards, too — and by doing so, they can improve the learning and the lives of the young people they encounter in the schools. There are mentoring opportunities, job shadowing programs and a wide variety of other ways for business people, members of community groups and caring individuals to connect with kids in classrooms at every age level. By giving in this way, they can have a José in their lives, too — and a young José can gain more than you can imagine.

Even students themselves can get in on the giving and receiving. Students tutoring and mentoring younger students is no longer uncommon. It is an approach to teaching, learning and connecting in the school community that certainly can grow.

This publication includes a number of stories that highlight the kinds of opportunities and experiences that make education the best it can be for everyone involved. These stories remind us that education is a living thing — vibrant, and very human.

The saying "It takes a village to raise a child" may



Commissioner Sternberg spends some time in a classroom at Bolton Center School. Joining her in this "seatwork assignment" are (clockwise from left) Nora Noonan, Samantha Fazzino, Ms. Heather Marques, Michael Cassello, Cody Shorey and Amanda Vousdan.

have been overused to the point that it has become a cliché, but clichés are always rooted in truth. It **does** take all of us to care for our children, to teach them, to support and guide them as they grow into well-educated, responsible, compassionate citizens who are involved in our democracy and live lives that give them both tangible and intangible rewards.

A family's annual budget to provide for its child? Thousands.

A school district's annual budget to educate its students? Millions.

The state's? Billions.

The chance to teach and influence generations of students?

Priceless.

These increases happened despite significant increases in the student participation rate on the tests — approximately 5 percentage points from 2003 to 2004 in each subject area, and roughly from 90 to 95 percent overall. Participation increased more dramatically for subgroups that were underrepresented in the past, such as students receiving special education services, English language learners, students eligible for free or reduced-price lunches, and African-American and Hispanic students.

The performance of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunches was notable. The percentage of these students scoring at or above goal increased by an average of 2.2 percentage points, while the percentage reaching the proficient level or above increased by an average of 5.7 percentage points across the four subject areas. Special education students made gains in both reading and writing; this is especially significant because special education students were required to take the assessments of their actual grade levels, not adjusted in any way (as was possible in the past).

Some results, however, are cause for concern. The four-year trend (2001-04) does not show a closing of the gaps when comparing ERG I, the state's largest cities, with ERGs A-H, the rest of the state. In fact, data show increases in gaps of 1.8, 2.7 and 1.3 percentage points in math, science and reading, respectively. There was no change in the performance gap in writing.

"The across-the-board and subgroup performance gains from 2003 to 2004 are very encouraging," said Commissioner Sternberg. "Our tenth graders should be proud of themselves. Their participation rate is very high and their performance continues to increase.

"The fact that from 2001 to 2004 there have been some increases in the performance gaps between our ERG I communities and the rest of the state clearly shows that we all have more hard work to do," she continued. "All students have a right to achieve at the highest possible levels — and we have a responsibility to help them do it. We must continue our relentless focus to do just that."



Simpson-Waverly School: A Story of Transformation

By Don Goranson

“We simply had to do something that would make a difference, or we would be out of business and not be allowed to make that difference.”

These powerful words do not summarize the logic of a market strategy or the bottom line of a product evaluation. Rather, these were the educational crossroads Dr. James Thompson felt he had reached in 1994, about seven years into his principalship at Hartford's Simpson-Waverly School.

The soft-spoken 35-year Hartford educator smiles to ensure the exaggeration of his understatement that “Hartford is a very interesting district. We have been through nine superintendents, a failed experiment with a private company that gutted our infrastructure in order to make a profit, and a state takeover. Now, to this instability,” Thompson continues, “add Hartford's totally unacceptable student performance on the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT), the Sheff case, the push for greater accountability and the federal No Child Left Behind legislation — all of this is in a period of 18 years — and you're in a real quandary.”

But those crossroads triggered creativity and the development of a “signature program” that would become Thompson's legacy as he moved to a semiretirement role in the Hartford district over the summer. Simpson-Waverly's School Improvement Program propelled student achievement at the K-6 facility to the number one ranking in Hartford and resulted in a national “Blue Ribbon School” award.

Simpson-Waverly is a 360-pupil school on Waverly Street in Hartford's far North End, located between a cemetery and a section of Keeney Park, just south of Tower Avenue. The school's name honors Frank Simpson, a prominent Hartford community and civil rights leader of the 1950s and '60s. School demographics include a student population that is 88 percent African-American and 11 percent Hispanic. About 60 percent of the students come from single-parent homes and qualify for free or reduced-price meals.

“Totally Unacceptable”

More important to Thompson, however, was a statistic from a school year in the mid-1990s when exactly **ONE** Grade 4 student at Simpson-Waverly met the state goal standard on one of the CMT assessments. “This was totally unacceptable,” Thompson said. “But our team (faculty) was very motivated to effect change.” The school improvement team assembled in 1994 established some very high (“some members thought they were unrealistic”) goals for student achievement in reading, writing and mathematics.

Framed prominently about six steps inside the front entrance to Simpson-Waverly School is the Frederick B. Wilcox quote, “Progress always involves risk. You can't steal second base and keep your feet on first.” These

words would prove to be prophetic, as staff members tackled Thompson's initiatives and transformed Simpson-Waverly into Hartford's outlier school — separate from the rest because of high student achievement.

“We were very mindful of the forces that were against us,” Thompson recalls, “but the staff here set a very significant goal. We wanted to increase the number of students meeting or exceeding the CMT goal standards in

Thompson's School Improvement Program has featured a highly structured monthly review of each student's academic progress; a comprehensive set of expectations for teachers, customized annually in a 24-page booklet titled *Accountability for Instruction and Learning*; and the beliefs that every child is important and that no one will fall through the cracks at Simpson-Waverly.

For his part, Thompson has run a tight ship. “To be instructionally effective, a school needs to be operationally sound,” he points out. The Hartford native, lifelong resident and product of the Hartford school district describes what he calls his “collaborative management style,” but then pauses, smiles and clarifies this label: “But of course you will understand that there are times when this will need to be a bit more autocratic.”

Student Academic Review

A five- to six-member team, headed by the principal, is assembled each month to officiate over the Student Academic Review process. Substitute teachers rotate from classroom to classroom as regular teachers present individual student portfolios to the team. Portfolio content is predetermined by the team to ensure accountability in:

- examining and analyzing student work in relation to district and state frameworks;
- discussing student progress, as evidenced by portfolio content and class assessment records;
- assessing portfolios to determine the need for additional support, intervention and professional development;
- determining the effectiveness of curriculum, instruction and assessment;
- monitoring the pacing of instruction, particularly in the areas of literacy and numeracy; and
- providing feedback to teachers to enhance strategies and techniques to ensure effective instruction.

“This program really does give us a good handle on each student's progress throughout the year,” Thompson said. He pointed out that Student Academic Review has been pivotal in terms of diagnostics. “We know what's going on with each student in each classroom. We can offer interventions for the students or customized professional development, modeling or other technical assistance for our staff members.”

Simpson-Waverly's *Accountability for Instruction and Learning* provides teachers with guidance in both organizational and content pacing, and comes complete with suggested schedules and instructional time allocations. The booklet includes the school's mission statement,

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Dr. James Thompson takes a phone call at Simpson-Waverly



Simpson-Waverly proudly displays its Blue Ribbon School banner

reading, writing and mathematics to 60 percent.” The results were quite remarkable.

- In writing, the percentage of Grade 4 Simpson-Waverly students at or above the state goal standard increased from 28 in 1998 to 85 in 2002.
- In reading, the percentage jumped from 28 to 76 between 1998 and 2002.
- And in mathematics, for the same four-year period, the percentage rose from 18 to 56.



Retired Teacher Making a Difference as Mentor

By Henry Garcia

David Roberson considers himself lucky. The 17-year-old former student admits he made some mistakes during his years in public schools, but now, thanks to Ray Johnson, he has a plan. Johnson, a retired teacher, has taken Roberson under his wing to make sure Roberson has a bright future.

Johnson is one of many “mentors” in Connecticut who are making the difference in the lives of young adults. “I met David when I taught fifth grade more than 11 years ago,” Johnson explained. “He stood out as someone who needed a little help, and from that point I’ve made it a commitment to ensure he makes good decisions regarding his personal and professional goals.” Roberson is one of several students Johnson has guided throughout his 35 years in public education.

Johnson taught in South Windsor early in his career, but he spent the majority of his tenure teaching Grades 4 through 6 in East Hartford. “I found teaching children in economically disadvantaged areas to be fulfilling. I wanted to do everything I could to help these children because many of them go without the basic necessities like food, clothing and shelter,” he said.

“When David came into my life it was a breath of fresh air. Here was a kid that needed direction. I could see he was a good kid, but he needed mentoring,” Johnson added. As a student, Roberson would often go to him for tutoring. Through the years Johnson eventually became a part of the Roberson family.

“Mr. Johnson is like a father to my son,” said Jacqueline Roberson, a single mother of two. “My son listens to him and he gives David good advice. David now wants to apply for the Job Corps program, complete his GED and become an electrician,” she said proudly. “Mr. Johnson has been a good influence on David, and I wish other teachers could do the same.”



Ray Johnson shown in a mentoring session with David Roberson

Johnson, reflecting on his relationship with Roberson, said it’s a moral obligation for a teacher to follow his students long after they leave the classroom. “I feel it’s the responsibility of teachers to follow two or three students throughout their years in school to make sure they don’t go astray. In David’s case, I advised him to go back to school, get his diploma and learn a trade.” Two of Johnson’s former students have pursued careers in the military and Coast Guard. “I want my students to develop high ethical standards and to be productive citizens in our community.”

According to Roberson, he credits Johnson for the frank, one-on-one discussions they have had. “Mr. Johnson treats me with respect and tells me when I’m messing up,” he said. “Mr. Johnson has been with me for 10 years and I trust him,” Roberson said emphatically. “I’m a good kid, and I’ve learned from my mistakes.”

Mentoring is hard work. The challenges of balancing teaching responsibilities, mentoring and one’s private life are daunting. “I remember not going home until after 6:30 p.m. because I wanted to be available at school for my students. It’s something I felt compelled to do, and I would hope others would feel obligated to do the same.”

Johnson has no immediate plans to slow down. “I’ve been out of the classroom for two years,” he said, “and I’m ready to keep on going as long as I’m making a difference.” In retrospect, Johnson said, he’s “the lucky one.”

EDITOR’S NOTE: Johnson earned many awards during his career. He was named East Hartford “Teacher of the Year,” and was named to “Who’s Who in American Education.”

James Thompson’s Leadership Creates Outlier School at Simpson-Waverly

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five goal statements, and a list of 10 expectations for students, staff members and parents.

Every Simpson-Waverly staff member — including food service workers and school custodians — is assigned to serve as a mentor to a student in Grades 3 and 5. “We believe that everyone shares in this major responsibility,” Thompson explained. In fact, many take on multiple mentorships. The retiring principal reflected back on a success story involving the school’s head custodian, who would have lunch every day with a sixth grade boy. Although Thompson could not reveal the specifics, he said this mentorship “made a huge difference in this young man’s life.”

Volunteers from all walks of life are very involved in the activities at Simpson-Waverly School. Thompson said the Big Brother/Big Sister Program has a major presence, and that students from the University of Hartford visit almost daily to serve as reading tutors.

The remarks of two veteran Simpson-Waverly teachers capture both the seriousness of the business at hand and the enthusiasm with which high student achievement is pursued by faculty members.

Sheila Marchand, Grade 1

“James (Thompson) has approached this very systematically. Our children weren’t making it! No one on this

staff thought that this was OK. Everyone here was on board from the start.”

“When we (teachers) come to this school we stay; some of us for 30 years. So when we start a conversation, we build upon it year after year.”

“We have voice mail here, so parents can call us; and we have great professional development — even from PIMMS (Project to Increase Mastery of Math and Science) and the Connecticut Writing Project.”

Andrea Namnoun-Allen, Special Education

“We know absolutely where these children are (academically) at all times and there are no ifs, ands or buts about what’s expected of you here.”

“The kudos that culminated in our Blue Ribbon School award have caused parents to buy in to what we’re doing here. Believe it or not, we have a 90 percent attendance rate at parent-teacher conferences.”

“We have very high standards here. The students are orderly, and we work in the cleanest building in Hartford.”

The comments of Sheila Marchand and Andrea Namnoun-Allen are significant in understanding the impact of James Thompson’s 17-year principalship at Simpson-Waverly

School, which became an interdistrict magnet school this fall. Thompson’s semiretirement role will include some part-time mentorships with new principals.

But the Hartford community need not worry about Dr. Thompson having too much idle time on his hands. A marathon runner and an active member of the Metropolitan AME Zion Church, Thompson serves as chairperson of the Connecticut Advisory Council for School Administrator Professional Standards, Treasurer of the Connecticut Federation of School Administrators, and chairperson of the Education Subcommittee of Hartford’s Commission on the Status and Future of Children and Youth.

When asked to reflect on his 35 years of service, Thompson’s response was clear and emphatic: “The highlight for me,” he said, “is seeing my former students serving in this community as productive citizens. It can be a fireman giving me a wave as a firetruck passes by, or a policeman stopping to greet me as he walks the beat.”

One recent day, however, was particularly memorable. “I walked into the Fleet Bank in Downtown Hartford and a bank employee - a former student - made an announcement to her co-workers: ‘This is Dr. Thompson! This is the man who taught me how to do math!’

“When I look back at my career as an educator, **THIS** is what it’s all about!”



MLC Magnet School Emphasizes Global Approach

By Marsha Howland

Schema activator: Not a phrase most of us heard in middle or high school, but at the Metropolitan Learning Center in Bloomfield, it's core stuff. Precisely, according to Dr. Suzi D'Annolfo, principal of this National Magnet School of Distinction, it is "a way of engaging the brain as soon as the student walks into the classroom, (to become) focused on the content of that class. And it works."

Actually, the schema activator is the second of three things students see every day in every class session. The first is "The big idea." The last is "What I need to know, understand and be able to do" as a result of the class.

Consider what greeted seventh graders in an electronic music lab as they worked on creating a title song for a movie:

Big Idea	Blues – style and form
Schema Activator	Melodies Are you ready to show off your music? Is it your best effort? You never know who will be visiting!
Know, Understand And Be Able to Do	Blues scale Transpose bass and harmony Create 4 melodies Present your work

(The impartial visitor confirms that the music was terrific.)

The full name of this 700-pupil school is The Metropolitan Learning Center Magnet School for Global and International Studies — MLC for short. It is an interdistrict magnet school operated by the Capital Region Education Council (one of the state's six regional educational service centers) in partnership with six communities: Bloomfield, East Windsor, Enfield, Hartford, Windsor and Windsor Locks. Students from Grades 6 through 12 are served. Because classes have been added each year, the Class of 2005 is MLC's first senior class. There is much excitement about this, not just due to the social realities, but due to academic realities, as well. Every senior must do a senior project — it's a graduation requirement — with some type of presentation at the end of his or her year-long efforts.

And these seniors are creative and ambitious. How about a project to evaluate what it takes to open a shelter — and then open one? Or a one-man art show? A full-blown rock concert with proceeds going to the United Way? A two-student project to produce and try to publish a children's book (one student the illustrator, one student the writer)? A cross-age teaching project with a hearing senior who is an expert in American Sign Language teaching ASL to younger students?

There is a great deal of energy at MLC, but the school is about much more than energy. It is



"A Day of Roses," a tradition at the home school of Martina Brassel (second from right) in Switzerland, is celebrated at MLC. Principal Suzi D'Annolfo is shown receiving roses from Aya Takazawa (left) of Japan, and Jessica Matheson of Bloomfield.

designed around how the pre-adolescent and adolescent brain learns (thus, the big idea, schema activator and so on). This includes structure and repetition; and, at MLC, there is a common vocabulary. The mission statement is in every classroom; the pride pledge is everywhere. "We like to think we live this every day," Dr. D'Annolfo said. And by "we," she meant everyone: students, teachers, administrators, staff members.

**Pride is doing my duty to the best of my ability,
For as long as I have to,
For as many times as I have to,
In order to get the job done.**

Diversity is a strong characteristic of MLC's student population and staff, but the word "minority" will never be heard there. Instead, you will hear the phrase "points of reference." Dr. D'Annolfo explains that "background,



A corridor scene at Metropolitan Learning Center

race, gender, age, where you live, your family makeup — these are all points of reference. I actually learned that from one of our parents my first week at MLC. They never use the term 'minority' in their home because it's degrading."

Connections are what matter at the Metropolitan Learning Center, as its focus on global and international studies suggests. In fact, MLC's brochure makes it clear: "A global systems approach to international studies emphasizes the connections within our world."

In the sixth grade, all students explore Chinese, French, Spanish and Italian; in seventh grade, they choose their major language for study (they may also choose to continue studying a second language). All sophomores learn Arabic on an exploratory level during what is known as the Middle East Seminar. MLC graduation requirements include three years of world language study and achievement of Functional Oral Skill Level 2 in a second language.

However, "global and international studies" means far more than world languages studies. Graduation requirements call for two years of studies in this arena, including what are known as area studies and issue-centered studies. Opportunities for international experience — including educational travel, online projects with students from all over the world, and studying and living with exchange students at MLC — abound.

Ten days before the beginning of military action in Iraq, and again shortly after the fall of Baghdad, MLC students held teleconferences with students from Iraq. According to Caryn Stedman, curriculum and instructional specialist for international and global studies, "The whole premise of that was to help students to understand that they're more alike than different. The students were very interesting to listen to, both before and after."

ABC news picked up the story and did a lengthy feature on it. Looking at a brief excerpt from the video, Ms. Stedman pointed to one MLC student after another. "This young lady just got back from six months in Germany. This young man spent last summer in Finland. She's in Germany right now for a year. This young man is in Japan now for a year." She added, "We try to get our students to other countries as much as possible."

One student who participated in the teleconferences, Katie Loubier of East Windsor, loved the experience and continues to feel its positive effects. "It was a great experience," she said. "We got to learn about what they felt about us and the war, what they do on the weekend. We learned that they're not so different from us."

"I've been talking to Ruba, Sari and Ahmed. Ruba is going to be on Cape Cod for this school year, and we're going to try to get her to come here."

(continued on page 7)



Rookie Metropolitan Learning Center Teacher Finds 'Right Place'

Bill Jaeger came to the right place.

In 2003, finishing up his master's degree work at Harvard, he knew a few things. That he wanted to stay in New England, that he wanted to be involved in urban education, "and that if I had chosen to go into a large, comprehensive high school, I would have felt isolated."

Jaeger and the Metropolitan Learning Center found each other, and for this social studies teacher whose rookie year was 2003-04, it was a perfect match.

"There are so many opportunities for students and teachers to grow

personally and professionally," he said as his first year of teaching came to a close. "Dr. D'Annolfo is a true visionary.

"I knew I wanted something larger than my day-to-day interaction with students. I wanted to teach them in an environment that would set them up for success.

"My favorite part," Jaeger continued, "is the students. We're lucky to have the intimate atmosphere we have, the frequent student-teacher one-on-one interaction we have. Students look at you and understand you as a person. They understand that every day you're here for **them**.

"Everyone is interested in students and student success. That's what gets you up in the morning.

"And they're **amazing** kids."

Jaeger speaks in thoughtful, reflective tones. He is quiet but very serious about what he says about MLC.

"This is a place where everyone comes to give our students the best opportunity to learn and be successful," he said. "The students come to work, we come to teach, and the administration supports us in what we do."

The right place, indeed.



William Jaeger

Principal Finds School 'Work of Art,' 'Labor of Love'

(continued from page 6)

The word "minority" will never be heard... (because) "background, race, gender, age, where you live, your family makeup — these are all points of reference."

—Dr. Suzi D'Annolfo

"We wouldn't have this kind of opportunity [elsewhere]. Our school tries to create all these options; they get grants for activities we probably wouldn't have at other schools because of the lack of technology and connections," Ms. Loubier said.

Ah, the technology. Every student has a laptop — all wireless. Every student can e-mail not only their teachers, but every adult in the building. According to Principal D'Annolfo, it's not uncommon for her to get e-mails from students. She always responds.

Teachers e-mail parents daily about student progress; every teacher has a Schoolnotes page where assignments and long-term projects are posted. There's a high-tech Smartboard in every classroom. These and many other uses of technology in teaching and learning have resulted in Microsoft choos-

ing the Metropolitan Learning Center as one of its 16 educational training sites in the United States.

There are intangibles at this school, too. Students look visitors straight in the eye and say, "Good morning." They call the principal "Dr. D," and they know she means it when she says her door is always open (they pop in to ask a question or say hello). Three or four students sit together on the carpeted floor in a wide hallway, their laptops open, working on a project. The chorus rehearsing "You Raise Me Up" knocks you out, even though Dr. D says some of the strongest voices are missing. Dr. D stops to tell a sixth grader how much a poem he wrote and read aloud the day before meant to her. He had said she had inspired the poem; she confided to a visitor that, because he was a sixth grader, she hadn't yet gotten to know him well. She had no idea her words throughout the year had affected him so.

"All the messages you send every day are critical," she said after a moment's reflection. "You never know what message kids will hang onto — so make sure it's helpful to them, supportive of them, something that helps them to grow."

Dr. D's heart and soul are in this place, and she isn't afraid to show it. "This is the hardest work I've ever done," she said, "but the most significant — doing what you know is good for students.

"We make everything we do here meaningful, purposeful; looking at the big picture while helping every individual learn and grow.

"This is a great place," Dr. D'Annolfo added. "It's like a work of art, a labor of love. One teacher said, 'It's OK, we can sleep in July.'"



Junior Jeremy Springer completes an assignment on his laptop computer.



High Student Achievement at New Haven's

By Don Goranson

Consider a large urban school district in Connecticut characterized by a high percentage of poor minority students, less than one-third of whom are achieving at mastery levels on the reading, writing and mathematics assessments of the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT).

Now focus on a middle school (Grades 5-8) located in the same city, where students are selected by "blind lottery" from the general Grade 4 population, but where the percentage of eighth graders achieving at mastery levels on the same CMT assessments is triple that of the home city, much higher than the statewide average, and greater than the results of many of the state's affluent suburbs.

The city is New Haven and the middle school is Amistad Academy, one of Connecticut's 14 public charter schools. Administrators and faculty members at Amistad are quick to point out, however, that achievement comparisons have *nothing* to do with demographics and *everything* to do with offering a rigorous academic program and teaching students to act as effective public citizens. The academy promotes the concept that "no student falls through the cracks."

The success of the Amistad program is well documented and has prompted a visit from U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige and the summer 2004 PBS television documentary "Closing the Achievement Gap." Principals from across the nation and from at least three other countries have taken up brief residencies to observe Amistad's school culture and standards-based instructional program. Amistad Academy is clearly New Haven's middle school of choice, receiving some 500 applications for 65 Grade 5 openings. And it is common for eighth graders who may have entered Grade 5 as troubled street kids to leave Amistad with scholarships to some of the finest private boarding schools in the region.

What is it about this 275-pupil middle school with a 97 percent African-American and Latino population where 84 percent of the students qualify for free or reduced-price meals that has the nation watching?

Using Same Yardstick

Amistad Director Dacia M. Toll, one of three former Yale Law School students who founded the charter school in 1999, answers this question very succinctly: "Amistad believes that black and Latino students from poor backgrounds can succeed. This is all about what gets taught, how it gets taught, who teaches and school culture. And we offer clear, measurable and dramatic proof of this with the same yardstick — the Connecticut CMTs."

A Rhodes scholar at England's Oxford University and a graduate of both the University of North Carolina and Yale Law School, Toll directs Amistad operations in the styles of both manager and principal, but still finds time to preside over the school's daily "morning circle"



Amistad Director Dacia Toll uses overhead projector to make a point in her sixth grade math class

and teach a sixth grade math class. She says Amistad Academy's "silver bullet" of success is a well-defined listing of nine "core elements" which have emerged over the school's five years of operation (These core elements are presented on page 9.)

The Amistad model is being duplicated in New Haven this fall under a separate charter with the opening of the K-8 Elm City College Preparatory School. To accomplish this and to pursue the potential for opening additional schools, the Amistad Board of Directors has created Achievement First, a nonprofit charter school management company headed by Doug McCurry, Toll's associate director.

"There is nothing magical or mysterious here," McCurry explains. "We believed and now can prove that ALL students are able to achieve at high levels under a tightly disciplined structure and with a standards-based curriculum." And he is quick to point out that, "We never let our students use excuses about what's going on at home."

An Amistad Academy visitor realizes instantly that there is something very different about the culture of this school.

- Students wear uniforms (blue golf shirts and khaki slacks, skirts or shorts) and pass to classes without speaking in supervised lines, except for eighth grade "pinholders" who have earned the privilege

of walking without an escort.

- Corridors are lined with college pennants from across the country to add visual impact to Amistad's mission as a "college preparatory middle school." This year's eighth grade class is referred to as the "Class of 2013" — the year of graduation from college.
- Pictures of "Amistad's Aces," students who have earned straight A's, and the names of students winning "REACH Awards" (respect, enthusiasm, achievement, citizenship and hard work) are displayed prominently throughout the school.
- Visitors should expect to be greeted with direct eye contact by students extending firm handshakes: "Hello! My name is John. Welcome to Amistad Academy!" And banners everywhere — such as "READ BABY, READ!" — cry out for action on the part of students.

Morning Circle

The sounds of three African drums — culturally significant because something VERY important is about to happen — call the student body to the gym for an eye-opening "morning circle." With students and faculty members lining the sidelines and endlines of the basketball court, an eighth grader steps forward and shouts rhythmically, "Who are we proud to be?" The assemblage responds: "AMISTAD ACADEMY." The school chants continue for three to four minutes with questions and answers such as: "What does it take to succeed? WORK! HARD WORK!" It is explained that this schoolwide team-building begins in the summer for entering fifth graders in a three-day "Amistadization," described as being half boot camp and half pep rally.

At a morning circle in mid-June, awards for Amistad's ACES and the school's essay contest were celebrated. But there were constant reminders of how school administrators work to focus on discipline. "We had to suspend two students yesterday for playfighting. Remember, you need to think at all times about who you are, where you are and why you are here," Principal Toll advises.

An Amistad faculty member recalled one of the first warm days of spring when Toll issued a firm reminder at morning circle about the length of skirts and shorts. "You need to look in the mirror each morning," she is reported to have warned, "and ask yourself, 'Self, can I see my knees?' If the answer is yes, then you need to wear something longer."

Students returning to school from a suspension lose their privilege of wearing the Amistad blue golf shirt and are required to wear standard white T-shirts and step into the morning circle to apologize for their conduct and explain their plan to avoid a repeat performance. During the last school year, a student returning from a suspension



African drums played by Soccus Henderson, Jr., Jivanlee Perez and Roland Green sound the official call to Amistad's Academy's "morning circle."



Amistad Academy Earns National Attention



REACH banner displays the five keys to student success at New Haven's Amistad Academy

for having pulled a false fire alarm was surprised in morning circle by the appearance of several New Haven firefighters, who had been invited to explain the potential consequences of directing fire apparatus to a non-emergency.

Parental Contracts

The parents of Amistad students are required to sign contracts pledging that their youngsters will be on time, in uniform and have completed their homework. Parents must sign off on homework and promise to return phone calls from the school within 24 hours, to attend conferences with teachers, and NOT to schedule family vacations so that students will miss school.

School officials can document that incoming Amistad fifth graders are two years behind where they should be academically. "But this is exactly who we are trying to reach," technology teacher Malik Ramiz explains, "the student who just might not make it." Ramiz is a Hartford native and Navy veteran of the first Persian Gulf war with teaching experience in two other Connecticut districts.

"These are good kids," Ramiz says. "It's just that they need structure. They come here from single-parent, discombobulated homes, have had no breakfast, have little respect for authority and look at school as a playground." Ramiz says his job at Amistad has been like a "breath of fresh air. My colleagues care! We are able to look beyond skin color and language barrier and work to transform their thinking about school."

Four eighth graders talked about their Amistad experiences, which include school days some three hours longer than their neighborhood schools, rigid dress codes, frequent suspensions, parental contracts, and a school culture so different that the possibilities of going to college quickly come into focus.

Kaylani Rosado, who just earned a \$36,000 scholarship

to the Williston Northampton School in Massachusetts, said she got the shock of her life on her first day at Amistad. "A teacher was waiting at the door and greeted me by name. When I asked, 'How do you know my name?' the teacher said, 'This is Amistad Academy. We know EVERYTHING here!'" Kaylani relates that her Amistad experience has featured meetings with the U.S. Secretary of Education and an NBA star, as well as trips to Atlanta and Canada.

"You can't get away with not doing your homework here," according to Alex McKeithen, "because they will definitely call your parents." Alex is now attending a private ABC Program high school in Longmeadow, Mass., where he and two other students live with a host family.

"Mom Made Me Stay"

Luis Oppenheimer admits that — as a fourth grader — he had been "hanging out on the streets with nothing but bad kids. My mom made me come here," Luis explains, "and the Amistad way wasn't my style. But believe it or not I made the honor roll this year. I tried to get out of here, but Mom made me stay and I'm glad I did." Oppenheimer now attends New Haven Academy.

Shynise Streater also had experienced problems at one of New Haven's neighborhood schools. "I came to Amistad because my mom wanted rules set down for me. Believe me, you have to get right down to business here, and if you don't listen, you'll get into trouble and get suspended." Shynise's four-year Amistad education led to her acceptance at Eagle Rock, a private boarding school in Colorado.

The overwhelming success of the Amistad plan is found in the creative blending of the school's three overarching goals: academic excellence, public citizenship and public school reform. The challenge was to take poor minority students by blind lottery from the New Haven public schools, create instructional, assessment and enrichment programs in a very structured culture, and prove through the CMTs that ALL students can achieve at high levels.

Marc Michaelson, former Amistad teacher and an incoming principal at Elm City College Preparatory School, had worked in Africa a total of seven years for

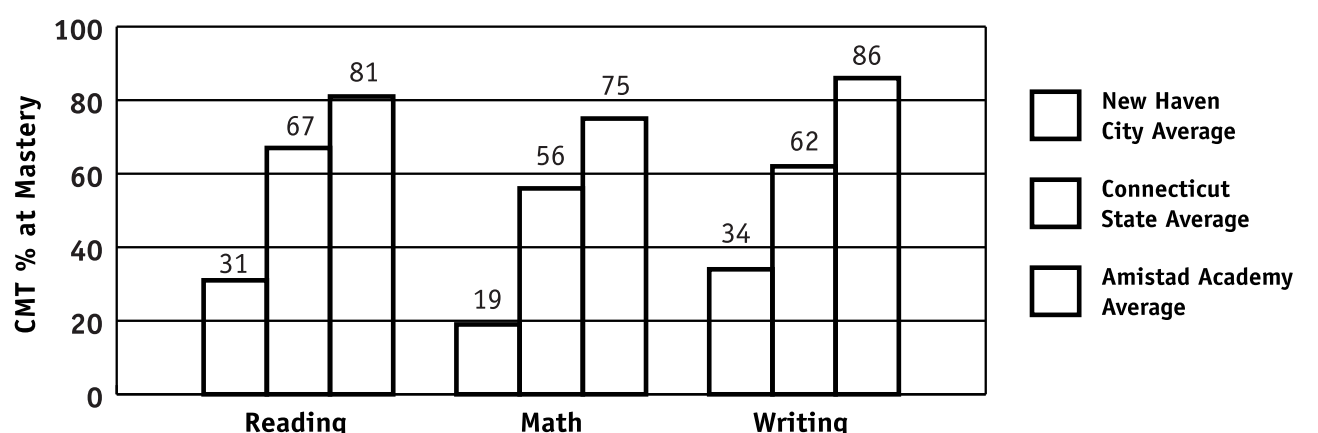
★ **AMISTAD ACADEMY** ★

CORE ELEMENTS

- Unwavering focus on breakthrough student achievement**
- Consistent, proven, standards-based curriculum**
- Interim assessments (every six weeks) and strategic use of performance data**
- More time on task (longer day) plus before- and after-school tutoring**
- Principals with the power to lead (budget and human resources)**
- Increased supervision of quality of instruction by principal and academic dean**
- Aggressive recruitment of teacher and leader talent**
- Disciplined, achievement-oriented school culture (REACH values)**
- Rigorous, high-quality, focused training for principals and leaders**

the Peace Corps and Save The Children Foundation. "It was fate that Amistad and I found each other," he explained. But now Michaelson is eager to duplicate the much-celebrated program's successes. "We're ready," he said, "to prove that this was not an individual phenomenon created by a charismatic leader."

CMT Performance – 8th Grade Students – 2003



Data are clear and dramatic about the Amistad success story, with students achieving far above their counterparts in New Haven, and well above the average for eighth graders across Connecticut.



Hard Work, Sense of Community Keys to Success in Bolton

By Marsha Howland

It isn't easy being a superintendent of schools, even in a small town like Bolton. But Joseph V. Erardi, Jr. is lucky; his office is in the Bolton Center School, right next to Mrs. Kemp's first grade classroom.

"On my worst day in the office," Erardi said, "I can always go next door and sit with the first graders and listen to some of the best teaching and learning, and nothing else matters."

The superintendent's words hint at what becomes obvious if you spend even a little time at the Bolton Center School (BCS): Everybody loves this place.

In Mrs. Kemp's class, the students love almost everything about school. Asked what they like best, they were eager to share: Writing. Reading. Drawing. Illustrating (they published their own book last year). Recess. Coloring. Music. Library. Math. Nothing left out.

When asked what "education" means, they were quick to answer, too. Reading. Teaching. Learning. They're young, but they get it. They know what school is about.

Rick Lambert is an eighth grade social studies teacher, the K-8 social studies curriculum leader and Student Council advisor. "The thing that sets BCS apart is the feeling of community," he said. "I really like the little guys being here. It's a family atmosphere....I just love the little guys coming by and giving you high fives and such. It's a fun place to be."

"That's the general consensus," said Ruth Buteau, who just retired as a Grade 7 and 8 math teacher and K-8 math coordinator. "There are some pretty close ties among the staff members, too."

"For as long as I've worked here, I've felt I've worked in this little protected country that doesn't have the problems that I hear about elsewhere."

"A Powerful Mix"

Principal Philip Lanfranchi echoes those feelings. "I like the kids – how well-behaved they are," he said. "I like their attitude. And the parents can't help us enough. The teachers love each other. They come to work with a smile on their face. For me, that's a powerful mix."

But what about the students? What do they think about Bolton Center School? Sixth grade friends Shannon Mainville and Amber Morra, students at BCS since kindergarten, agree: It's a great place to be.

"It's fun – it has a lot of things to do for kids," Shannon said. "A lot of hands-on activities....I like the extracurricular things, and all the teachers are really nice."

Amber also likes the many activities ("there are a lot of groups to join"), and offers an overall assessment of the atmosphere that the grownups would probably



Bolton Center School Grade 6 teacher Nancy Muller works with students Shannon Mainville (l) and Amber Morra.

like very much. "It seems like everyone gets along," she said. "There isn't any fighting. We feel safe."

The positive environment at BCS is due in great part to a three-year Rights and Responsibilities program based, Lanfranchi said, on a recognition that "We needed to do better by the children in the school, and we needed to have a unified approach." The social-emotional learning committee, consisting of parents, teachers, administra-

tors and students, developed and supports the program. A student-designed poster highlights the language that is at its core.

Students at Bolton Center School have the right to be respected, accepted and safe; to learn and make choices. They have the responsibility to respect others, accept others, exercise self-control, "do our best," and make wise decisions.

"We speak that language all over the school," Lanfranchi said. "It has made quite a difference. Office referrals are down. Behavior is better all over the school. It's something everyone buys into. We find this language has a very powerful effect. A first grader knows what we're talking about, and a sixth grader knows what we're talking about."

"A Special Place"

Christine Hawkes-Ladds, president of the Bolton Center School PTA, describes a wonderful sense of community at BCS and credits the Rights and Responsibilities campaign for helping to create it. At the K-8 school, she said, "You feel that everyone is watching out for your children, and that the children are watching out for each other. It's a nice group of kids. There's a lot of friendliness and openness at the school. It's a special place...."

"The social-emotional learning program deserves a lot of credit," Hawkes-Ladds continued. "They start in kindergarten teaching the children how to treat each other, teachers and visitors."

Superintendent Erardi is another supporter of the Rights and Responsibilities program. "It's the appropriate way to run the building," he said. "The reduction in detentions and suspensions is just immense for a K-8 school."

The school environment is, of course, just part of the picture. Student achievement is critically important. School improvement — and therefore improvement in student success — is guided by annual, multipart school improvement plans. Each item in each plan is focused and specific. For example, item two for 2004-05 reads, in part, "CMT [Connecticut Mastery Test] Action Planning will continue for all teachers K-8 with a focus on science. Instruction and curriculum improvements will be made to meet the new requirements of the [State Department of Education] Science Curriculum Framework, and prepare students for the Science CMT."

The key to planning and implementation of plans, Lanfranchi said, is this: "We're moving forward around things that directly involve students and learning."

He continued, "When you have a small school, you have to realize that you don't have a lot of people to point to and say, 'Take the ball and run with it.'"

(continued on page 11)

Rights and Responsibilities Go Hand in Hand



Student-designed poster promotes Bolton Center School's Rights and Responsibilities Program



STUDENTS SEE FIRM HAND, SOFT HEART

Windsor Teacher Overcame Much to Accomplish Dream

By Coleen Thomas

"Whatever you are, be a good one."

— Abraham Lincoln

On this 180-day excursion, I have learned and accepted that teaching is an arduous task which must never be taken lightly. As a first-year teacher, I have just accomplished my goal of surviving a 10-month period of blood, sweat and tears, and can only state that I have just endured one of the most humbling experiences of my life. No education class, practicum or veteran teacher can ever prepare a first-year educator for the journey she continues to embark on each day as she steps into that classroom which is now her very own. The overwhelming mélange of emotions and responsibilities I encounter on a daily basis has only made me realize the incredible profession that I am now a part of and the profound importance of my role in educating the future leaders of this world. I am proud to begin this journey.

I entered Windsor High School for the first time as a teacher on August 24, 2003, 10 years after graduating from this very institution. The emotions running through my mind were inexpressible, and I knew that I had a mission to fulfill. As a young African-American single mother who put herself through years of schooling to accomplish a childhood dream, I was determined to be an influential role model in my students' lives. I also possessed an indescribable urge to prove myself, as I was a minority among my colleagues. This was to be my first step in this new role.

Statistics show that, while minorities compose 30 percent of the student population, only 13.5 percent reflect the teacher workforce. However, as these numbers continue to soar for student enrollment, they continue to decrease for the number of minority educators taking on this rewarding challenge. As Oliver Wendell Holmes once stated, "The greatest thing in this world is not so much where we are, but in what direction we are moving." Hence, I have immense hope that we are moving in the direction of reconstructing the composition of our schools, which will allow all of our students to benefit from the presence of teachers of all cultures. It is no longer sufficient for minority staff members to just be represented on the cafeteria or janitorial staffs; rather, they must be in the classroom instructing on a daily basis.

In Windsor High School, the minority is no longer the black or Hispanic student, but the white student who was formerly the majority just a few years ago. Minority students now make up 58 percent of the population and are still considered the "minority." When these facts emerged in black and white via another article written last year, many students questioned why they still needed to be labeled as "minority" when the

definition no longer defined who they were in our school environment. With disappointment in their eyes, they looked to me, one of their few black teachers, for answers. I immediately enforced the notion that they must be the master of their own image, rather than let others define it for them. It was clear that they no longer wanted to accept the roles that society has foisted upon them, and as their leader, I supported them wholeheartedly. A major journey that society must embark on is one where we must "believe the best of everybody" and trust that all students are capable of excellence. But first, we must listen to their concerns and face them head on, because they have much to say.

Not until that moment of enlightenment directed toward my students did I realize that I did not have to prove myself to anyone but myself. First and foremost, my identity is not primarily defined as an "African-American" or "black" educator; I am an educator — period. I am no different from my associate at the next desk over from me, as we have both struggled through the same obstacles, laughed at the same unforgettable moments and cried about the same frustrations — our skin tones just seem to vary somewhat. The only thing that does matter is that I have chosen to be a teacher, and I am good at it. What else is more important than that?

At the start of the year I was often discouraged and at times flat-out scared, when one day I realized that "if there is no struggle, there is no progress."

In every lesson, I attempt to reach out to my students and allow them to free their minds and think outside the boundaries which society often traps them into. I speak to them on a level that they can comprehend, and I listen to their fears, as well as their hopes and

aspirations. I stand in front of the class with a firm hand, while always displaying the soft heart which accompanies it. I learned that "nothing is more despicable than respect based on fear," and I did not want my students to ever feel intimidated by me. I was moving in the direction of being a teacher who didn't just instruct, but one who listened and learned as well.

It has been said that "children are apt to live up to what you believe of them." As a first-year educator, I saw that this is nothing but the truth.

It is a fact that this experience thus far has been an indescribable one — but my role as an instructor is not. We are here to encourage, uplift and mold. Let's remember to always do this to the best of our ability. In doing so, with each step our destination will one day be reached.



Windsor High School Teacher Coleen Thomas

Bolton Center School Keeps Focus on What's Best for Kids

(continued from page 10)

Invariably, it's the teacher, who works a seven-hour day and then does more."

Bolton Center School's approach to the Connecticut Mastery Test is very clear. "We look for gradual, slow, incremental improvement," Lanfranchi said. "We realize there are differences among children. But if we're doing our job, we're seeing gradual improvement over time, and that's what we're seeing at our school."

The superintendent supports this approach to progress on the CMT. "We're very competitive in ERG [Education Reference Group] C," Erardi said. "Our schools improve every year...We just feel that hard

work will take care of everything, and we have a very hard-working staff at Bolton Center School..."

"We have a willingness in our faculty that goes way beyond the requirements of the contract," he continued. "You can walk down the hallways at 5:30, two hours after the students have gone, seeing faculty members talking with colleagues, preparing for the next day."

As simple as it sounds, it all comes down to the children and what they need. Bolton Center School has 640 students, about 70 teachers and 100 total staff members. Even with such a small student population the school looks to create smaller learning communities. The middle school (Grades 6-8) is a separate entity, and students in Grades 4 and 5 are seen as having similar needs, as are

younger students (for example, kindergarten students). "We have unique learning styles and needs in these learning groups," Principal Lanfranchi said. "If you keep that in mind, you really can't get too far away from your kids — you give your kids the support and resources they need."

Once again, there are echoes from the superintendent. "With this national cry of smaller school environments, it's been in Bolton a long, long time," Erardi said. "We've got teachers who know every student. We have a PTA that's in harmony with the school."

"It always comes down to what's best for the children, not what's best for adults. When you do that, everything else falls into place."



Families Reap Benefits of Resource Center at School

By Don Goranson

A kindergarten teacher in Torrington makes a helpful suggestion to the mother of a student in her class.

Mom is advised by the teacher that the kindergarten student's 3-year-old sibling might benefit from participation in a play group operated by the school's family resource center. The seed is planted, the suggestion is pursued and the child starts attending play group activities.

Within a very short period of time the 3-year-old is identified as having special needs. The family resource center refers the child to the school district's central office, which arranges for a special needs preschool program placement.

Success stories like this one are not uncommon among the 62 Connecticut elementary schools that are fortunate to be receiving the comprehensive services of a family resource center.

In the Torrington example, which took place at the Vogel-Wetmore School, the child was able to receive the services which assured kindergarten readiness, while a grateful mom now serves on the family resource center's advisory committee.

School family resource centers are structured to provide what often becomes a family's first contact with the public schools. And, as Vogel-Wetmore center director Michelle Anderson points out, the child who received early intervention in the story above "may not have been identified this early and most likely would have been held back had it not been for the exposure to school district services our center brought to this family."

Grants of \$102,000

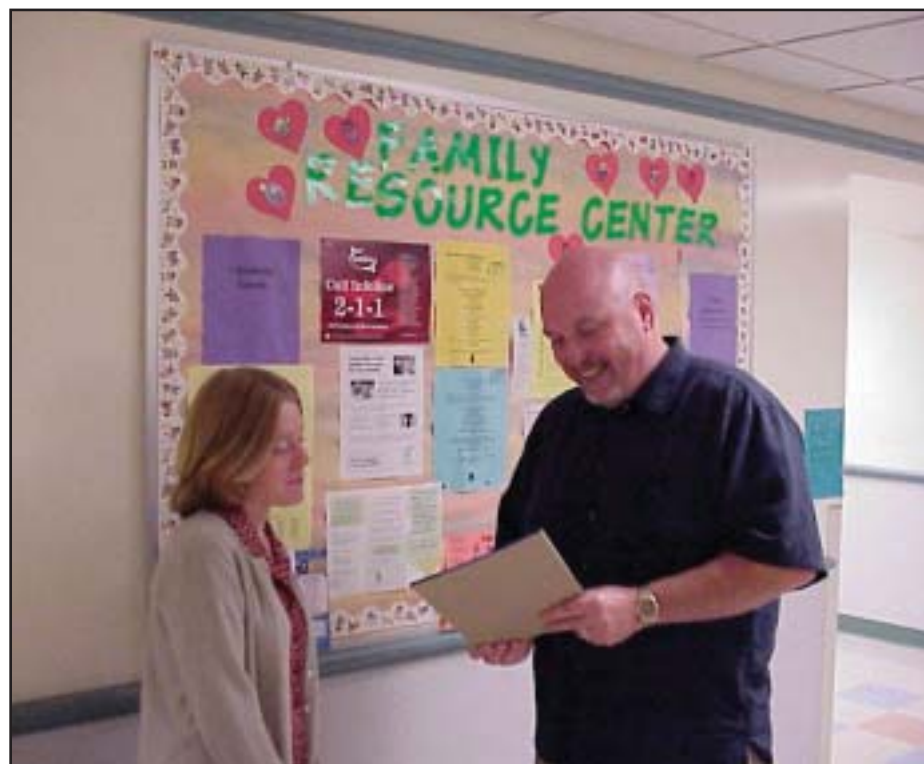
Connecticut family resource centers promote comprehensive, integrated, community-based systems of family support and child development services. Centers are located in public school buildings and operate according to the "Schools of the 21st Century" model developed by Dr. Edward Zigler of Yale University. All centers receive state funding in the amount of \$102,000 and are required to offer programming in the following seven areas:

- quality full-day child care and school readiness programs;
- school-age child care;
- resource and referral services;
- families in training;
- adult education;
- support and training for family day-care providers; and
- teen pregnancy prevention programs.

The family resource center (FRC) at Vogel-Wetmore is entering its seventh year of operation — the third under Michelle Anderson's leadership — and currently provides services to 323 families, nearly three-fifths of those

represented by the school's student population. The school is located in the heart of Torrington's business district and the percentages of students coming from single-parent households and of those who are eligible for free-or reduced-price meals both mirror that of families enrolled and receiving FRC services.

"The economy is very much a part of the increasing needs here," Anderson said, "with corporations closing and growing numbers of people out of work." Vogel-



Family Resource Director Michelle Anderson chats with her principal, William Joslyn, at Torrington's Vogel-Wetmore School.

Wetmore is classified as a *severe needs school*, although the FRC director is quick to point out that "we are here to serve everyone, regardless of need."

Vogel-Wetmore Principal William J. Joslyn is high in his praise of the center's work. "The family resource center is a vital part of this school and this community, and there isn't a person in Torrington who wouldn't agree."

Joslyn, who came to Vogel-Wetmore two years ago from a principalship in Regional School District 6 (Warren, Morris and Goshen), explained that he had never worked at a school that had a family resource center before coming to Torrington. The mere existence of the center at Vogel-Wetmore, he said, "allows us to do things that I had never been exposed to before in my 15 years as a school administrator."

The principal supported these remarks by citing several examples:

- "preschoolers are exposed to this school as being a safe and secure place in which to learn;
- "parents find out who we are before their children start school;
- "parenting classes ignite important discussions about who they are and who we are; and

- "we are constantly striving to make vital connections by collaborating with families in need, the family resource center, our school social worker, and service providers out in the community."

Joslyn describes FRC activities as "kids-first programming," and he is quick to point out that, while the center is "here for us, we're also here for them whenever they ask."

Louis Tallarita, statewide coordinator of family resource centers for the State Department of Education, reports that centers can exist in any community, but that funding is approved on the basis of competitive grant applications.

Assessing Needs

Tallarita says the state's 62 centers are required to serve a cross section of the population "and actually take their lead from what the communities need" by conducting needs assessments, engaging in dialogue with parents and school officials, and then working with the provider organizations to which intervention referrals are made.

Monthly activity reports indicate that the programs and services offered by Connecticut's family resource centers can be very different in scope, due to the size or demographics of school attendance areas. Because of this, Tallarita points out, "most centers are actively involved in community fund raising to supplement their state grants as they strive to promote positive youth-development activities."

At the Vogel-Wetmore School, FRC director Michelle Anderson doesn't mince words when she says, "We simply couldn't survive on the state grant alone." The center has been able to secure contributions from at least a half-dozen organizations, the largest being \$5,000 from the Torrington Area Foundation for Public Giving for after-school programming.

Anderson, who worked in Torrington's Head Start program and managed Danbury's 21st Century after-school grant prior to her Vogel-Wetmore assignment, holds an advanced degree from the University of Connecticut School of Social Work and currently serves as vice president of the state's 62-member Family Resource Center Alliance. "I love working with kids and their families, so this is a perfect fit for me," Anderson said.

The links between families, the school and the community that are being provided by the Vogel-Wetmore FRC are getting rave reviews. Anderson offers the following evidence:

"We have the full support of the mayor, Board of Education and superintendent of schools. We have very high visibility because of our networking and collaboration. We have excellent awareness because of newspaper coverage and our own public relations efforts. And we have the support of the Vogel-Wetmore faculty. A half-

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Tutoring Program at Bristol Eastern Makes the Grade

EDITOR'S NOTE: This article was written by Lisa Pearson and is reprinted with permission of The Bristol Press

Funding for an after-school tutorial program at Bristol Eastern High School was due to be temporarily terminated in mid-May, but due to the program's success, the State Department of Education and Bristol Board of Education extended the funding.

The program, called "After the Bell," which began in late January, has contributed to significant improvement in student grades and performance, according to Elaine Taylor, guidance counselor and program coordinator.

"The funding that was extended was for the certification tutoring and the late bus transportation," said Taylor. "Next year we will reapply for the grant. We're hoping to start the program again as early in September as we

possibly can and take it well into the third or fourth quarter," she said.

Funding was not provided for two student tutors who had been paid \$8 per hour, but Taylor said they both decided to continue on a volunteer basis. "All the student tutors are volunteers now," said Taylor. The four teachers involved are the certified tutors for whom funding was extended.

More than 40 students are receiving the tutoring for an hour after school on Mondays and Wednesdays. The tutors and teachers break into four classes, each focusing on specific subjects: algebra, geometry, English and bilingual/organizational skills. The math rooms also focus on science subjects and the English room also assists with history.

Taylor said that after administrators came up with the idea for the program, she became involved to try to develop a program she thought could work for the

students. "I wanted to focus on a few main needs of the students," said Taylor. Those needs include organizational support such as note-taking and studying skills, academic development, homework completion, preparation for tests and quizzes and project work.

Taylor said one student who was failing geometry before the program now has an 84 percent average. "Kids who weren't doing very well, or weren't totally organized, are now passing their classes," Taylor said. "Parents, students and teachers will all tell you they've seen a difference."

The program began at the start of the second marking period. According to Taylor, who just received the results of the third marking period, the success rate has doubled over the previous period.

Part of the program's appeal, Taylor said, is that students can't be involved in it unless they really want to be there. In order to participate, a referral form

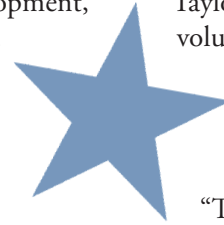
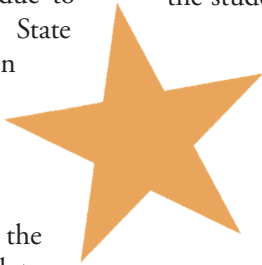
must be filled out by the teacher, parent, counselor or student.

The tutors are there by choice as well. Taylor said she has between 15 and 20 volunteers. Each student who wants to participate must fill out an application and be interviewed by Taylor.

"The tutors need to have excellent communication skills and also be firm and stern enough to keep kids on task. Of course they must have good knowledge on the specific subject matter as well," she said.

There also are incentives. Each time a student attends a tutoring session, that person receives a raffle ticket. At the end of the month, Taylor hosts a mini-award ceremony. One student will win a compact disc in the raffle.

"This program started out very small," Taylor said. "It just keeps getting bigger, and we hope we can continue to receive funding."



Torrington Center Serving Needs of 323 Families at Single School

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dozen teachers, including the school's gym teacher, serve in key roles as volunteers in the after-hours programs." Her overall assessment of community support comes with a smile: "In Torrington, we're a 10," Anderson said.

The needs of the more than 300 Vogel-Wetmore families enrolled in one or more of the seven areas of FRC programming have resulted in a virtual cornucopia of services and activities. The center is open throughout the year and averages 40 calls or contacts per month for resource and referral services.

Levels of need and participation for 2003-04 are documented in the sampling of Vogel-Wetmore FRC programs and activities that follows:

- 50 children were enrolled in the daily summer play group and adventure club;
- 16 children received the full-time preschool services of Head Start;
- 80 families were represented at a school readiness transition night;
- family literacy nights were held five times during the school year;
- 16 children were enrolled in morning and 19 children in afternoon school-age child-care programs;



Summer playgroup participants "mug" for the camera outside Vogel-Wetmore School

- 156 children participated in after-school enrichment clubs;
- 19 students were served in a School Buddies Mentoring Program;

- 209 attended a Lights-On After School event;
- 60 families participated in the Parents as Teachers Program;
- 60 individuals completed English-as-a-Second-Language classes; and
- 42 day-care providers received support and training.

"A fifth grade boy was walking the halls with a very sad look on his face," Anderson recalled. "He didn't seem to be fitting in, his home life was in turmoil, he was spending a lot of time in the principal's office, and was at risk of academic failure."

The school nurse contacted the family resource center, where a staff member was able to locate "a very confident, young college student from the community" to serve as the boy's mentor. Anderson said their relationship grew to be very strong and positive by playing sports, having lunch and participating in other activities. In a very short period of time the boy began to correct his behaviors and act positively toward peers and staff members.

"Mentoring," Anderson explained, "had a significant impact and made a difference in this boy's life."

Michelle Anderson says her "phone doesn't stop ringing" and that some of the center's programs have waiting lists. Opportunities to meet the needs of children in the Vogel-Wetmore community abound.



Alternate Route Program Has Prepared 2,900 Teachers

By Lee Hay, Director of ARC

The Alternate Route to Teacher Certification (ARC) Program was created by the state legislature as part of the Education Enhancement Act of 1986. The two major responsibilities of the program are to provide an opportunity for adults with strong academic preparation to change careers and become teachers, and to help address teacher shortages in specific academic disciplines.

Admission to the ARC program is highly competitive, with approximately 30 percent of the applicants being admitted. Applicants must possess a college degree in the subject area in which they plan to teach, a record of academic success in college, experience working with youth in an organized activity, and a record of successful work experience. Approximately 45 percent of those admitted to the ARC program have master's degrees or doctorates.

The first ARC class graduated in 1988, and since then ARC has prepared more than 2,900 new teachers for Connecticut. Who are these people who enter teaching through the alternate route? Here is a sampling of the students in the summer 2004 ARC program.

Nuclear Submarine Commander

George Jackson retired from the U.S. Navy after a 30-year career that included being a professor at the U.S. Naval War College, the director of tactical training at the U.S. Naval Submarine School, and commander of three nuclear submarines. Such accomplishments are all the more impressive because Jackson had been a high school dropout. However, he went on to earn a bachelor's degree in nuclear engineering and naval science at the University of Wisconsin.

When he was forced into retirement because he had served the maximum years permitted, he decided that he would look for employment that would allow "Dad" to be available to play a very active role in raising his two children.

Thus Jackson became an instructional aide at East Lyme High School, tutoring special education students in math, science and history, and a teaching assistant in an after-hours program for expelled students. He has a strong commitment to becoming a teacher and approaches teaching with his belief that "every child has the ability to succeed if the teacher can captivate that child's interest."

Connecticut State Trooper

Dwight Washington has been a Connecticut State Trooper for 14 years, and during this time he became certified as a DARE officer and a community resource officer as well as a Big Brother. He has more than 18 years of military service and is a first lieutenant in the Army National Guard. He quickly realized that he "loved dealing with kids" and that his background could well make him a very positive role model for them.

Washington grew up in the projects in New York City, but that didn't stop him from reaching his goals. He

believes that many students will look at him and his background and think, "If he can make it, so can I."

Washington applied to the ARC program with an eye on his future. He plans to continue as a trooper and hopes to work part time as a teacher until he retires. Then he would like to become a full-time middle school teacher. He is focused on middle school students because he believes we have the best chance of reaching students and making a difference at that point in their lives.

Firmly committed to becoming a teacher so that he can continue to give back to his community, Washington says he will approach his classroom with a "sensitivity toward individuals from all realms of life."



Alternate Route to Teacher Certification Program Director Lee Hay (3rd from right) is shown with five recent graduates, from left to right, George Jackson, Dwight Washington, Sheila Sylvestre, Lan Yang and Bill Cantrall.

*For information about the
Alternate Route to Certification,
call the ARC office
at (860) 947-1300 or go to
www.ctdhe.org
and click on the ARC link
at the bottom of the page.*

Musician and Acoustical Engineer

Bill Cantrall excelled in music and physics as a high school student. That led him to earning a dual major at Northwestern University in electrical engineering and jazz studies.

However, the reality of making a living led to his becoming a consultant in acoustical engineering for

building projects across the country, including work on fire alarm public address systems for the U.S. Capitol and the Supreme Court Building in Washington, D.C. His true passion was music, so he continued part time as a professional musician, leading several jazz ensembles in New York, Chicago and Washington and performing and recording with various jazz and Latin groups. He also composed and arranged for a number of musical organizations.

But what excited Cantrall the most in his life were his experiences as a teacher of music. He began giving private music lessons to students in the Chicago area and ultimately directed master classes in trombone and improvisation in the New York area. "Seeing the students improve, or just seeing them get excited and involved, gave me a great feeling, one that my work as a professional musician or engineering consultant could not provide," Cantrall said.

Agricultural Engineer

Lan Yang came to the U.S. from China in 1985 speaking no English. She had earned a BA degree in China in agricultural mechanization, and within four years, she earned a master's degree and finished the course work toward a Ph.D. in greenhouse engineering from Ohio State University.

Lan Yang and her husband moved to Connecticut, where he began teaching at the University of Connecticut and she became a full-time mother. Over the years, she worked part time on research projects in her field.

However, Yang had always dreamed of becoming a teacher, and when she helped found the Storrs Community Sunday Chinese School, she decided to make her dream a reality. She became a volunteer at her children's school and a substitute teacher in the Mansfield Public Schools. Then she was approached to become a part-time teacher of Chinese at the Connecticut International Baccalaureate Academy, teaching under a durational shortage area permit. She accepted the position and has loved her teaching experience at the academy.

So Yang decided that she wanted to become a certified teacher and recognized that ARC was the perfect program for her. With her strong academic background and her experiences in working in educational settings, she came to ARC very strongly focused. "I know what I need to learn. I bring the questions. ARC is helping me to find the answers," she pointed out.

Corporate Trainer

Sheila Sylvestre began her career in marketing and sales at SNET, where she quickly became a highly successful team leader and corporate trainer. She then formed her own consulting company, which has worked with technology industries across the U.S. in developing employee

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HUNDREDS OF OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED

Real-World Experiences Vital in Choosing Careers

By Tom Murphy

Why do I have to learn math? What will I do when I finish school? What am I going to be good at? These are perennial questions posed by teenagers in classrooms across the nation as they try to sort out their futures.

Educators in Stratford and in a growing number of high schools throughout Connecticut have come up with a good answer: "Find out for yourself in the real world — while you're still in school and with the guidance of adults in the community who want to help you grow."

"I knew I wanted to help people in some way, and I've been interested in technology," said Ashley Bleier, a 2004 graduate of Stratford's Bunnell High School, who took advantage of the job shadowing and internship opportunities available through the school district's career and technology education program. "I selected an internship at Bridgeport Hospital; it was great, I learned a lot, and then they hired me. This year, I will be working at the hospital and attending college to become ultrasound certified. But my long-term career goal is to become a radiologist." Bleier said she's now confident that she can set goals and reach them. "It helps when you have some experience working with people who already do the job."

According to Diane Christiano, who oversees the district's career and technology education and mentoring programs, "We offer hundreds of opportunities for our students to get a taste of the world through job shadowing, internships, guidance and career planning activities. Students respond very well when they participate in out-of-classroom activities and interact with caring adults in a workplace setting."

In Stratford, every high school sophomore is required to job shadow at least once. Students visit construction sites, courtrooms, hospitals, businesses, schools, colleges, government and other work locations. "This gives students a chance to refine their career searches and develop some sense of what they could be interested in as a career. The program has hundreds of partners who offer these experiences to high school students," said Bunnell High School's school-to-career coordinator, Victoria Priddle. "In this way, our community is working with the schools to help students set themselves up for success."

Bunnell senior John Guglielmoni said, "There are so many things I'm interested in that I need to sort it out. I like to work outside, I like to see tangible results of my efforts, I'm good at math and I'm creative. So I participated in the ACE program. Each week we meet with a team of architects, construction managers and engineers who volunteer to work with us on projects. Some projects are real, others we make up. But we do each one the way it would hap-

pen in the real world. I know more now what I want to do, with college at least, and that's a good start for me."

The program typifies a movement in Connecticut high schools to provide more real-world experiences for students and to put students in touch with caring adults from the community who can help to guide them, give them on-the-job experience and serve as role models. Whether it is called school-to-career, work study or career education doesn't matter; it's becoming an important part of the high school curriculum statewide.

*"In this way, our community
is working with the schools
to help students set
themselves up for success."*

— Victoria Priddle,
Bunnell High School

Another feature of the Stratford program is the extensive network of community mentors who meet with their students weekly to read, to talk, to answer questions and to support their students' positive development. The mentoring program serves students at all grade levels.

"We meet once a week and talk. I'm not a parent, not a peer; I care and I connect with my student and we both enjoy the time we spend together," said Priscilla Long, director of the local family resource center, who mentors a fifth grade girl. Other mentors include the town manager and assistant town manager, business executives, retirees and community leaders. Lyndon Saunders, a senior at Stratford High School who emigrated from West Africa two years ago said, "When I came here, I didn't know anything. My mentor got me involved in school, in sports."

In a new high school course — entrepreneurship — business professionals visit for guest lectures, case studies, mock interviews and questions and answers. As part of the course last year, students were asked to invest \$4,000 provided by People's Bank. "It takes on added meaning when the dollars are real," said Christiano.

Stratford High School senior Martine Calixte said her job shadowing experience changed her mind about becoming a hairdresser. "It's not for me, not every day. Instead, I've been working with kids in my internship this year. My mentor is a businesswoman, and I like her. We've been talking about what colleges I should look at."

According to Assistant Superintendent Robert Tremaglio, "Our schools need to keep growing and changing to meet the needs of students. We're finding out how we can stretch to do more. This year the system is working to provide a range of new opportunities from SAT enhancement to sports marketing and culinary arts strands and the pre-engineering program, Project Lead the Way.

"We have great learners, reluctant learners and average learners and have a responsibility to help them all find a taste of success."



Senior Jazmin Parker prepares to launch a search for a website as part of a research project.



State's 17 Technical High Schools Ready for Upgrades

The former Regional Vocational Technical High School System has been renamed the Connecticut Technical High School System. The action by the Connecticut State Board of Education is part of an overall effort to restructure and modernize course offerings, programs, equipment and facilities of these 17 high schools that provide an "applied and integrated curriculum" of academics and trade/technologies as part of a high school education.

The system has its roots in the 1910s, when trade schools were created in several regions of the state. The Regional Vocational-Technical School System was formed by state legislation in 1947.

"We are upgrading our curriculum and our facilities to address the changing needs of our students, communities and Connecticut's economy," said Dr. Abigail L. Hughes, who serves as superintendent of the system. "We have been making many improvements to our system, from bricks and mortar to high technology to requiring all of our ninth graders to take algebra or geometry, and we are building on a tradition of providing relevant career skills for our students," Hughes added.

Over the years these unique high schools have educated thousands of Connecticut students in the construction trades, occupation-specific training and apprenticeships, manufacturing and automotive technologies, culinary arts and hospitality skills.

In addition to expanding and improving these programs, the Connecticut Technical High Schools will also focus on areas such as information systems technology, including micro-processing, networking systems, programming and software development; health technology, bioscience environmental technology and other technical fields. While the name of the system has changed, the individual high schools will retain their specific names.

The mission statement of the Connecticut Technical High School System also has been changed in order to reflect the revised curricular goals and standards. The statement follows:

"The mission of the Connecticut Technical High School System is to provide a unique and rigorous high school learning environment that:

- ensures both student academic success, and trade/technology mastery and instills a zest for lifelong learning;
- prepares students for post-secondary education, including apprenticeships, and immediate productive employment; and
- responds to employers' and industries' current and emerging and changing global workforce needs and expectations through business/school partnerships."

The Connecticut Technical High Schools (CTHS) currently are launching their student recruitment period for the 2005-06 academic year. Grade 8 students who might be interested in obtaining information should contact their middle school guidance counselors or visit the Connecticut Technical High School System website at www.cttech.org

Any student who lives in Connecticut may apply to any technical high school. Each high school in the system serves a specific geographical region of the state and makes presentations to eighth graders in its area. The application process includes a review of a student's grades, attendance and test scores. Students are encouraged to apply early, as most of the 17 high schools have waiting lists.

The CTHS integrated curriculum provides courses of study in all of the required high school academics and, at the same time, provides technical training in the following careers: architectural drafting, automotive collision repair, automotive technology, carpentry, culinary arts, drafting technology, electrical, electro-mechanical, electronic technology, hairdressing and barbering, heating, ventilation and air conditioning, information systems technology, manufacturing technology and plumbing and heating.

There is no tuition cost to parents, as operating costs of the 17 high-school system are funded through the budget of the Connecticut State Board of Education. Transportation to and from schools in the CTHS System is provided by the school districts where the students reside.

The network of 17 schools offers services to special education students as directed by planning and placement teams, and also features a full range of sports and extracurricular activities.

The 17 technical high schools are located in the following communities:

- Bullard Havens, Bridgeport
- Henry Abbott, Danbury
- H. H. Ellis, Danielson
- Eli Whitney, Hamden
- A. I. Prince, Hartford
- Howell Cheney, Manchester
- H. C. Wilcox, Meriden
- Vinal, Middletown
- E. C. Goodwin, New Britain
- Norwich, Norwich
- J. M. Wright, Stamford
- Oliver Wolcott, Torrington
- W. F. Kaynor, Waterbury
- Windham, Willimantic
- Emmett O'Brien, Ansonia
- Platt, Milford
- Ella T. Grasso, Groton

Both Summer and Weekend ARC Programs are Offered

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programs on interpersonal, sales, leadership, team-building and customer service skills. Sheila has also been a free-lance writer for a number of corporations.

However, this busy business professional recognized that the demands on her life from her consulting work, particularly the large amount of travel required by her work, was taking too much time away from her family. The events of September 11, 2001, finally caused her to rethink her goals for her life.

As she contemplated her future, Sylvestre reflected on the fact that, as a trainer, she really was a teacher and that she truly enjoyed her experience working with children as a confirmation teacher for her parish. So she has chosen to become a teacher of middle school students.

Middle school students, she said, "are just beginning to think about things in their own right, explore the world around them with wonder and experimentation and engage in life-altering self-discovery." Sylvestre wants to be a part of that exciting world.

The Alternate Route to Teacher Certification Program is offered twice each year. ARC I is an intensive eight-week summer program that is in session five days a week from June through early August. The ARC II program is a weekend program that runs from October through April and is in session on Friday nights and all day Saturday on three out of four weeks each month. For more information, contact the ARC office at (860) 947-1300 or go to www.ctdhe.org and click on the ARC link at the bottom of the page.



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