

Connections is a districtwide publication presented to you by the
Office of the Superintendent, West Hartford Public Schools

Connections

With the West Hartford Public Schools

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*Connections is a districtwide publication presented to you by the Office of the Superintendent,
West Hartford Public Schools, 50 South Main St., West Hartford, Connecticut 06107
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Healthier US Challenge Award: 100% Certified

The United States Department of Agriculture's Healthier US School Challenge (HUSSC) has certified all 16 schools in West Hartford. Our district is the first in all of New England and New York to have 100% of its schools certified under this voluntary national certification. To date, only 1% of all schools nationwide have qualified, and only 40 individual schools have qualified in Connecticut. HUSSC supports First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move campaign by encouraging schools to strengthen their focus on nutrition, healthy eating and physical activity during the school day. These goals have a clear link to improved student achievement and behavior; West Hartford continues to be a leader in promoting the well being of its students.

Roszena Haskins Recognized With Award (continued from page 2)

Colleagues and members of the community who have worked with Roszena speak about her work on initiatives such as the Student Success Team, Community of Concern, and various community service projects for students. She is the Conard lead administrator for the 2013 evaluation by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC). Tom Moore, Assistant Superintendent, sums up Roszena's accomplishments: "Roszena is not only about building no fences, but about tearing them down."

Distribution Of *Connections*

An on-line version of *Connections* With the West Hartford Public Schools is now available at <http://www.whps.org/connections.pdf>. If you do not wish to have a copy of *Connections* mailed to your home, please email connectionsout@whps.org with your name, address, child's name and school. Thank you.

Connections is printed on 100% recycled paper.

Upcoming Events

Celebrating *Gifts of Music* Fundraiser

Intensive Education Academy
840 North Main Street, West Hartford
October 29, 2011 at 7:30 PM
Tickets: \$25.00 For information, call
860-561-6638

Conard play, "Six Degrees of Separation"

Conard High School Auditorium
November 17, 18, 19 at 7:00 PM
Tickets: \$10.00 adults, \$5.00 students
For information, call 860-231-5085
Special Performance for Senior Citizens
(no charge):
November 16 at 2:00 PM

Hall Choral Department, "Ye Olde Madrigal Feaste"

St. Thomas Seminary,
467 Bloomfield Avenue, Bloomfield
(All performances)
November 16 & 17, 7:00 PM - Student
Show (snacks only), \$10.00
Information & tickets for Wednesday,
Thursday shows: 860-232-4561, ext. 1067
November 18 & 19, 7:00 PM, Dinner
performance, \$35.00 adults, \$25.00
children
Information & tickets for Friday,
Saturday shows: 860-232-8226
Special Performance for Senior Citizens
(no charge):
Wednesday, November 16, 2:00 PM
NOTE: Tickets will not be sold at the
door; reservations must be made in
advance

Solisti Showcase

Location: Bristow Middle School
Free
Sunday, November 20 at 7:00 PM
For information, call 860-231-5000,
ext. 6038

Hall, Orchestra Concert

Town Hall Auditorium, free (donations
accepted)
Monday, December 5, 7:00 PM
For information, call 860-231-5000,
ext. 6038

Hall play, "Two Much Money"

Hall High Black Box
December 8, 9, 10 at 7:00 PM
Tickets: \$10.00 adults, \$5.00 students
For tickets and information, call
232-4561, voice mail 1066
Special Performance for Senior Citizens
(no charge):
December 7, 2:00 PM

Winter Concerts

Throughout the month of December
Check with individual schools for dates
and times

Hall Winter Concert

Hall High School Auditorium
Thursday, December 22, 7:00 PM -
No Charge

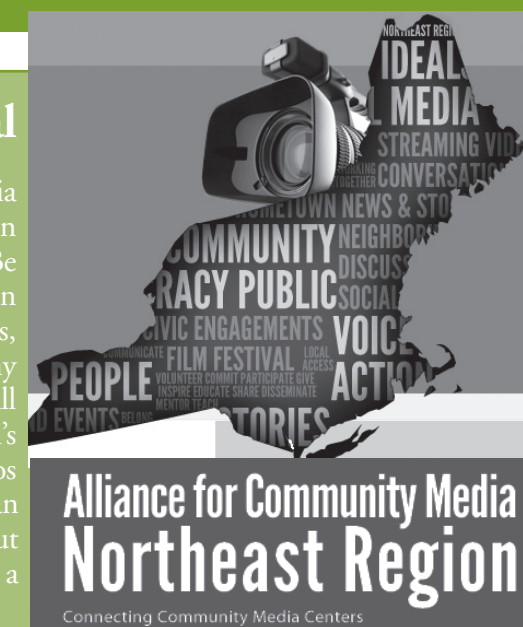
Conard Winter Concert

Conard High School Auditorium
Wednesday, December 21, 7:00 PM -
No charge

Smith School Wins Big at Video Festival

At the 14th Annual Alliance for Community Media Northeast Region Fall Video Festival, Smith School came in first place in the category for School/Educational Programs – Be The Media: Smith Elementary School. The Northeast Region includes: Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island and New York. An awards ceremony will be held on Saturday, November 12th, at the Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield, MA, from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Smith School's Be The Media video team won for their collection of videos they produced in 2010 about their school. Stories included an educational hallway exhibit about lizards, how kids feel about celebrating Mother's Day, and celebrating spring (including a return to outdoor recess) after a tough winter.

Community Television is dedicated to helping people tell stories in their own voices, and these students did an excellent job of sharing their school life as part of the Be The Media project. In 2009, WHC-TV launched Be The Media as a grass roots journalism project that includes media education in the West Hartford Public Schools and placed cameras with people at local non-profits, neighborhoods and libraries. Virginia Fisher of West Hartford Community Television worked with a video team of fourth and fifth graders along with the support of Smith School Curriculum Specialist Amy Parker. About half the students have moved up to the middle school where WHC-TV hopes they will continue their excellent work on a middle school Be The Media team. The 2011 Smith team is already hard at work.



Alliance for Community Media
Northeast Region

Connecting Community Media Centers

Mission To inspire and prepare all students to realize their
potential and enhance our global community

A Look Inside:

- New Administrative Roles
- "Build No Fences" Award
- Accreditation Visits Planned
- CMT/CAPT Scores
- Common Core Standards
- Healthier US Challenge Award
- Upcoming Events



New Administrative Roles for Two Faculty Members

Strong leadership in our schools continues to be of crucial importance for effective teaching and learning to take place in the classroom. Two new administrators joined the West Hartford Public Schools Leadership Team late this summer. Juan Melián has been appointed Principal at the Florence E. Smith School of Math, Science and Technology, and Andrew Mayo has been appointed the Department Supervisor for the Fine & Performing Arts.

Juan has worked in West Hartford since 1997 as a world language teacher and for the past three years as the Assistant Principal at Sedgwick Middle School. He received his law degree from Universidad de Las Palmas in Spain, his Masters degree from Central Connecticut State University, and his Administrative Certificate from Sacred Heart University. Juan has a reputation as an inspirational, honest, collaborative, learning leader with a strong record of forging strong connections among colleagues, families and the community. In partnership with the faculty and parents, he will ensure Smith students thrive in a caring environment with a renewed focus on science, math &

technology for a better future.

A former Teacher of the Year in West Hartford, Andy has taught at Wolcott since 2000. He received his BA from Princeton University and his Masters from the Hartt School. His previous experience includes teaching in the Teach for America program. Andy's firm knowledge of our district and our expectations, along with his passion for teachers and students as well as his collaborative leadership style will serve our school district well.

Our Comprehensive Mentoring Program provides appropriate support structure, resources and administrative training so our administrators can effectively embrace their roles. Each

Andrew Mayo
Department
Supervisor for
the Fine &
Performing Arts



Juan Melián
Principal,
Florence E.
Smith School of
Math, Science
& Technology



new administrator is carefully assigned a mentor whose purpose is to provide professional support through mentoring and other complementary programs. We

are confident that Juan and Andy bring a skill set that blends well with our current group of administrators and are excited for what the future holds.

Roszena Haskins Recognized With Award

This year the Bridge marked the 24th presentation of the annual "Build No Fences" award. Originated by Wayne Starky, the 4th Executive Director, the award recognizes an individual who works on behalf of children and families – someone who is "a true collaborator, whose heart is with the young people we serve". This year's recipient is Roszena Haskins, Assistant Principal at Conard High School.

Karen List, Superintendent of Schools, noted that Roszena "is a quiet, determined, insightful leader who places the needs of students at the center of every decision she makes. Collaborative and respectful, she is a life-long learner, a model of excellent judgment, a prompt and thoughtful communicator. Roszena exhibits grace under pressure, using expert problem-solving skills and effective culture building across departments and groups in and out of the school." These attributes are echoed by Peter Cummings, Principal of Conard High School: "Roszena "is the embodiment of an educator who considers the 'whole person' in her work. Her respect for each individual, her care for the emotional, intellectual, and physical well-being of each child, makes a difference for Conard students on a daily basis." (continued on back page)



CMT and CAPT Scores Remain Strong

In the 2011 test administration, West Hartford's CMT and CAPT scores were the highest they have ever been.

Some Highlights:

- highest scores ever for CMT (three years in a row)
- highest scores ever for CAPT (five years in a row)
- students improved more than the state average or the DRG (District Reference Group) average
- students' performance was similar to other similar demographic groups in DRGB
- students do better the longer they are enrolled in WHPS
- students met a majority of the Board of Education goals

The initiatives implemented through the District Development and Performance Planning process continue to bear fruit in raising our performance on the CMT's. Overall CMT scores rose on average by 1.0% from 2010's level of 77.6% at mastery to an overall average of 78.6% of students at mastery. The scores ranged from a low of 72% at mastery in 3rd grade reading to a high of 87% at mastery in 7th grade reading. We saw our highest scores ever in math in 10 of the 18 tests. The statewide average scores rose but more slowly – up 0.6% this year and the District Reference Group (DRG) B average scores rose by 0.4% this year. Interested parties looking for more CMT data can go to www.ctreports.com and, on the public portion of the site, access an amazing array of student performance data at the school or district level, including access to valuable demographic detail.

The spring 2011 CAPT scores showed growth from 2010 levels and reached their highest levels ever. West Hartford saw an average increase of 2.3% from an overall average of 67.6% at mastery in 2010 to an overall average of 69.9% at mastery in 2011. Scores went up in 2 of 4 subject areas – up 6 points in science, up 4 points in writing, down 1 point in math and steady in reading.

At Conard, overall scores increased by 6.4% to an average of 70.7% at mastery. Scores increased in 3 of 4 subject areas. Math was up 6.5% to 61.6%, science scores were up 12.4% to 70.7%, reading scores decreased slightly to 69.0%, and writing scores increased 6.9% to 81.3%.

Hall overall scores decreased by 1.1% to an average of 69.6% at mastery. Scores went down in math (down 6.5% to 63.6%), scores went up in science (up 0.2% to 68.2%), up in reading (up 0.2% to 68.0%) and up in writing (up 1.7% to 78.5% at mastery).

State Adopts Common Core Standards

In 2009, the Council of Chief State School Officers (State Commissioners of Education) and the National Governor's Association formed the Common Core State Standards Initiative. As part of that initiative, educators, content specialists, researchers, community groups, and national organizations, along with advisory experts, had input regarding standards. On July 7, 2010, the State Board of Education adopted by unanimous vote the new national academic standards, known as the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics. These standards establish what Connecticut public school students should know, be able to do and understand as they progress through grades K-12. Connecticut is one of over 40 states that have adopted



these standards. The Common Core State Standards Overview:

- designed to be fewer, clearer and of higher level
- aligned with college and career expectations
- include rigorous content and application of knowledge through higher order thinking skills
- build upon strengths and lessons of current state standards
- internationally benchmarked so that all students will be prepared to succeed in our global economy
- based on evidence and research.

The ELA/Literacy standards include "anchor standards" which also address literacy in science, social studies and technical subjects. These standards emphasize: a balance of literature and

IMAGINE
the Possibilities



NEASC Accreditation Visits for Conard and Hall Scheduled for Fall 2013

The New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) provides accreditation services for more than 2000 public and private institutions in the six state region. In order to be accredited by the Association, member schools must undertake an exhaustive self-study involving the participation of faculty, administrators, staff, students, parents, community members, and board members. Conard and Hall High Schools will host visiting teams in September of 2013.

Both high schools have redesigned their school-wide learning expectations to reflect the core knowledge and 21st century skills students will need in a rapidly changing world. Each school has aligned its vision of student success to the district mission and Board of Education goals by focusing on rigorous and relevant content, problem solving, communication, effort, and student support. The NEASC evaluation process will help each school identify areas of strength and needs for growth relative to the school's learning expectations as well as internationally benchmarked indicators of a rigorous and meaningful high school experience.

The NEASC Standards for Accreditation cover all aspects of a student's learning experience, including: curriculum, assessment, instruction, school climate, school and community resources, leadership, and technology. Committees composed of teachers, parents, and students gather and analyze evidence to support the school's progress relative to each individual standard; then that evidence becomes a part of the NEASC visiting committee's evaluation of the school.

Accreditation for each school is essential so students from West Hartford can continue to be accepted at the college or post-secondary school of their choice. Colleges and universities generally accept NEASC accreditation as outside confirmation of the quality of a high school program and depth of a student's learning experience. The feedback from the NEASC visiting committee and final report are key components in evaluating our high school programs in West Hartford's model of continuous improvement. For more information on NEASC and the accreditation process go to cps.neasc.org.

literary non-fiction K-5 (based on NAEP expectations); literacy as part of science and social studies/history; informational text as part of ELA (6-12); appropriately complex text; students' ability to answer questions regarding text (requiring close reading of text); students' ability to write to inform or argue using evidence, beginning in elementary school; use of academic vocabulary.

The Mathematics Standards are grounded in the Standards for Mathematical Practice; they describe various levels of expertise that mathematics educators at all levels should seek to develop in their students. The Math Standards emphasize: mathematical modeling; use of mathematics and statistics to analyze empirical situations; application to real world settings; thinking and reasoning mathematically; setting a rigorous definition of college

and career readiness.

We are studying these standards and have begun the process of learning about the standards and considering how to integrate them into our West Hartford Public Schools curriculum design and development process and teaching and learning. In June 2010, 31 states, including Connecticut, joined together to form the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC). Connecticut is a governing state in SBAC and is taking an active role in the consortium through representation on several workgroups with the goal of developing an assessment system that balances summative, interim, and formative components for ELA and mathematics. The full text of the standards are available at www.corestandards.org