

# Connections

with the West Hartford Public Schools

*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  
Phone (860)561-6651*

## School Performance Index

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) has made changes to its accountability systems replacing Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) with a new system called the School Performance Index (SPI). Under the new system, performance at all levels and for all subject areas tested on the CMT and CAPT – reading, writing, math and science -- will be factored into a school's SPI. The index will average all students' scores, scaled from 0-100, based on student achievement of mastery, proficiency, basic level performance, or below basic level performance averaged across all tests. The CSDE has set a target SPI score of 88 for all schools to be achieved within 12 years. This number represents a much more rigorous overall goal without calling for unrealistic outcomes, such as 100% of students achieving at a given level. The intent of the new system is to focus on mastery of the tests and on reducing the achievement gaps among students with disabilities, English language learners, students eligible for free or reduced lunch and black and Hispanic students. The SPI will measure progress over time and reflect student improvement at all levels. The new state accountability system takes effect in the 2012-13 school year and will use the results of the CMT and CAPT that will be administered in March. This information will be first reported in the late summer of 2013.

## Upcoming Events

<b>Hall, Play: "The Seagull"</b> Hall Black Box Theatre February 7, 8, 9, at 7:00 PM For tickets and information, call 232-4561, voice mail 1066 Free Performance for Senior Citizens: February 6 at 2:00 PM	<b>Solisti, Chocolate Café</b> March 9, 2013 at 2:00 PM & 7:00 PM Town Hall Auditorium For information and tickets, call 231-6038
<b>Conard, Pyramid Choir Concert</b> February 7, 2013 at 7:00 PM Conard High School Auditorium No charge	<b>Hall, Pops 'n Jazz</b> March 15, 16 at 7:30 PM March 21, 22, 23 at 7:30 PM Hall High School Auditorium For tickets and information, call 232-4561, ext. 1856 Free Performance for Senior Citizens: March 20 at 2:00 PM
<b>Hall/King Philip, "Luv" Choral Concert</b> February 11, 2013 at 7:00 PM King Philip Middle School Auditorium-No charge	<b>Conard, Musical "Peter Pan"</b> March 15, 16, 22, 23 at 7:00 PM March 17 at 2:00 PM Conard High School Auditorium For information and tickets, visit <a href="http://www.conardhighschoolmusical.com">www.conardhighschoolmusical.com</a> Free Performance for senior citizens: March 14 at 2:00 PM
<b>ArtBeat</b> Townwide Student Art Exhibition West Hartford Art League Clubhouse Gallery-Buena Vista Rd. March 6 - March 30, 2013 No charge Opening Reception, March 6, 4:30-6:30PM For information, call 561-6638	<b>Middle School Festival of Music</b> The Belding Theater, Bushnell Center for the Performing Arts April 3, 2013 at 7:00 PM For information, call 561-6638

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](mailto:connectionsout@whps.org) with your name, address, child's name and school. Thank you.

Third Issue

12-13

## A Look Inside:

- Charter Oak Building Project
- Leadership Appointments
- Emergency Plans

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## Welcome to New Members of the West Hartford Board of Education

Two new members have been appointed to the Board of Education due to the resignation last fall of Ellen Brassil and Lib Brassil Spinella. They are Mark Zydanowicz and Jay Sarzen. Mr. Zydanowicz has lived in West Hartford since 1998. Until recently, he was an owner and third generation family member of Guida's Dairy, one of the largest independent dairies in New England. Since the recent sale of the business, he has continued to work in a management role with the new ownership. His professional experience also includes working as a financial underwriter for United Health Care. He has served as a commissioner on the West Hartford Zoning Board of Appeals and has coached in the minor division of the West Hartford Girls Basketball League. Since 1991, he has served in the Connecticut Army National Guard, and, following a tour of duty in Iraq, was awarded the Bronze Star in 2007. He received his B.S. in marketing from CCSU and lives in West Hartford with his wife and three children.



Mark Zydanowicz

Currently working at Mass Mutual Financial Group, Jay Sarzen identifies strategic business development and efficiency opportunities. He has more than 10 years experience working as a consultant for Fortune 500 companies performing market analyses. In 2011, he ran as a republican candidate for the West Hartford Town Council and is a member of the West Hartford Republican Town Committee. He serves as chairman of the First Church Nursery School Board/Ministry and as manager of the West Hartford Youth Baseball League. A Southington native, Jay received his B.A. from Trinity College and MBA from the University of Notre Dame. He has been a resident of West Hartford for six years and has a son who is in first grade at Duffy.



Jay Sarzen

# Connections

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

## Emergency Plans

In response to the tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School, members of the West Hartford Public Schools administrative leadership team have been meeting with the West Hartford Police Department to review emergency plans and to look at how we can work together to keep our schools as safe as possible.

During the December vacation, police were trained in emergency preparedness at some of our schools and will continue their training during the February and April vacations at the remaining schools. During the summer, they will participate in joint training with our security department. You may see more police officers in our buildings as we work to familiarize all officers with our schools.

We would like to remind all parents that when they visit a school, they must buzz in and report to the office to sign in and receive a visitor's badge, which must be worn and clearly visible. In addition, we will be installing a new system in each main office, where an emergency button will notify the school staff when the school is in lockdown as well as connect as an alarm



Left to right: Conard High School Be Sharp singing at West Hartford Martin Luther King Jr's Celebration; Sedgwick Middle School Knitting Class donated \$300 dollars to Saint Jude's Children Hospital from the sale of their knitting; Students at Charter Oak International Academy

directly to the West Hartford Police Department.

We had been planning to install new entry systems in our schools, and this process will now be accelerated. We will be shifting to a key card entry system, which will require swiping an ID card to enter all schools. This will allow us to monitor if any doors in the building are open and create a log of who has entered the building. This process is aided by our move to wireless in all buildings, which is proceeding rapidly, and should be completed everywhere in the coming weeks. Lastly, we

will be reviewing all lockdown procedures at each and every building so that we do all we can to be prepared in case of an emergency.

West Hartford Public Schools is committed to creating an environment that meets the needs of our students and instills in them a sense of security,

optimism, and hope. Our focus is on keeping our students and staff safe, while maintaining an environment that is happy and welcoming. We will continue to take a measured, thoughtful approach in our response to this tragedy as we plan for the future.

## Connecticut Association of Schools 2013 High School Assistant Principal of the Year

West Hartford Public Schools is proud to announce the selection of Julio Duarte, assistant principal at Conard High School, as the 2013 High School Assistant Principal of the Year by the Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS). He will travel to Washington, D.C. in April where he will be recognized by the National Association of Secondary School Principals at an assistant principals' forum and award gala and will be honored by CAS at a recognition reception in October, 2013.

Julio will be entered as a finalist, along with the representatives from the other 49 states, the District of Columbia, and the Department of Defense Education, in the process to select a National Assistant Principal of the Year. From these 52 award winners, three finalists will be named; the winner will be chosen from among the finalists, and will receive a \$5,000 grant. Julio has worked at Conard for the past ten years, the first six as a school counselor, and the last four as assistant principal. Students admire his willingness to talk and spend extra time with them as well as encourage them to set the highest standards for themselves.



Julio Duarte

## Leadership Appointments

Dr. Karen List has announced the appointment of Dr. Nancy DePalma as assistant superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment effective immediately. She has been the interim assistant superintendent since November.



Dr. DePalma has served the West Hartford community for more than 25 years as a school counselor, department supervisor, and principal at both Hall High School and Whiting Lane. Her PK – 12 leadership, strong communication and interpersonal skills,

respected reputation and expertise with special education are cited among the outstanding qualities she contributes to the district. In addition, her record of being a proactive and responsive leader has made her a natural selection for this critical leadership position.

Last month, Dr. List announced the appointment of Mark Grudzien, former Spanish teacher at Hall High School, as interim assistant principal at King Philip Middle School. Mark fills the vacancy created by Karen Kukish, who moved to Whiting Lane as interim principal last fall. His leadership responsibilities have included chair of the NEASC Accreditation Steering and Assessment Committees, co-director of the Inter-cambio Exchange Program (Madrid) and AP Spanish Language Exam Reading Table Leader (Supervisor). A Hall HS graduate, Mark received his B.A. from Colgate University, M.Ed. from the University of Hartford with additional studies at SCSU, and completed his requirements for administrative certification at Sacred Heart University.



Please join us in welcoming Mark to the KPM community.

## Charter Oak INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY

### Charter Oak Building Project

The Charter Oak Community Advisory Committee is looking at options for renovating the existing building or building a new Charter Oak. The committee held two community forums at Charter Oak and at the Faxon Library branch in December. At these forums, the community's thoughts on the decision to renovate or build were solicited. Also, tours of the existing Charter Oak facility were conducted. In January, the committee met to hear from the planning architect on the proposals to renovate the existing building or to build a new school. The committee's views on the two options will inform the Board of Education when they meet on February 5 to review inclusion of the Charter Oak Project in the Capital Improvement Plan that the Board submits to the Town Manager in late February. Please visit the web page for all the questions and answers raised at the forums: <http://www.whps.org/cms/one.aspx?objectId=11304111>.