

CONNECTIONS

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EASTCONN's magnet high schools have earned the coveted NEASC accreditation, ensuring that high standards are in place.

EASTCONN Magnet High Schools Earn NEASC Accreditation

EASTCONN's magnet high schools, Quinebaug Middle College (QMC) and Arts at the Capitol Theater (ACT), have attained accreditation by the highly respected New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), following a rigorous, 7-year process of self-study and assessment.

Both QMC (located on the Quinebaug Valley Community College campus in Danielson) and ACT (in downtown Willimantic) are public, and open to Connecticut students in grades 9-12.

"I am so proud of our school community," said ACT Principal Sarah Mallory. "Our staff and students work so hard every day and it means so much that NEASC validated the work we do. The reports that the NEASC Visiting Committee prepared for us will help drive the work we do around school improvement for years to come."

NEASC is an independent, non-profit organization that connects and serves 2,000+ public and independent schools, colleges and universities in New England, as well as international schools in more than 65 nations. NEASC accreditation attests to a school's quality and integrity and assures colleges and universities about the quality of a high school student's academic record.

"Going through the challenging NEASC process that started seven years ago ... has improved QMC as a learning community in many meaningful ways," said QMC Principal Gino LoRicco.

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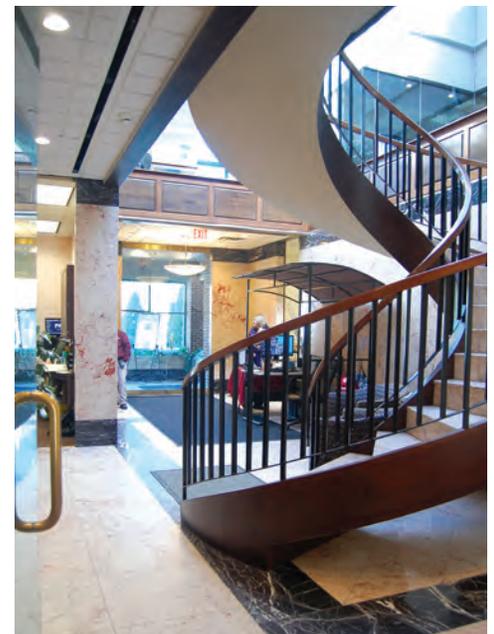
American Job Center Co-Locates w/EASTCONN's Adult Programs in Danielson to Help Job-Seekers

The Danielson Office of American Job Center (AJC) East, a free resource that connects job seekers in eastern Connecticut with employment and training opportunities, has moved to EASTCONN's Northeast Learning Center, located at 562 Westcott Road, in Danielson.

The move co-locates the AJC with EASTCONN's Adult and Community Programs, creating the second-of-its-kind employment, job training and education resource center in the state. The first AJC center opened in 2016, following a merger of the Willimantic AJC office with EASTCONN Adult Programs at 1320 Main St., Willimantic. Both the Danielson and Willimantic sites offer unemployed or underemployed adults a one-stop-shop for a broad range of free, job-related training and education services.

"Providing seamless access to employment and education opportunities is critical to developing a strong workforce in eastern Connecticut," said Carol Labelle, the Eastern Workforce Investment Board (EWIB) Director of Programs and Special Projects. "EWIB is very happy with this latest on-site collaboration in Danielson, which will make it easier for adults to connect with the resources they need to advance in their careers and succeed."

The AJC, funded by EWIB and supported by EASTCONN, provides employment services, a career resource library, job-related workshops and referrals, web-connected



The lobby of AJC's new home at EASTCONN's Northeast Learning Center.

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"I am so proud of the work that our students, families, staff, EASTCONN and QVCC have engaged in thus far in our journey, and I look forward to the work that's now before us." - Gino LoRicco, QMC Principal

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The NEASC accreditation process is intensive and demanding, and requires years to complete. It involves staff, students, parents and community members.

"The NEASC process is significant because it requires that schools engage in a very thorough, very honest, data-based investigation of everything that we do within the school to advance teaching and learning, and how we are supported by the district and the community," said Dr. Toni Ryan, EASTCONN's Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment.

"For a typical high school, the task is a 'heavy lift,' but for a small magnet school with few faculty, it's even more laborious, which is why not all magnets seek NEASC accreditation."

Read the NEASC reports at www.eastconn.org/act/neasc, or www.eastconn.org/qmc/neasc.

ACT enrolls motivated, independent learners who have a passion for the arts. Contact ACT Principal Sarah Mallory at 860-465-5636 or smallory@eastconn.org to learn more.

QMC enrolls independent, capable learners who seek more control over their educational program. Call QMC Principal Gino LoRicco at 860-932-4040, or gloricco@eastconn.org.

Both ACT and QMC are currently enrolling students for the 2018-2019 school year. Learn more by visiting their websites, or calling their principals, listed above.

National Tech Group Honors ACT Student



Naremean Aumaree's essay garnered kudos in the 2017 Future of Technology Summit contest.

EASTCONN's Arts at the Capitol Theater (ACT) junior Naremean Aumaree received one of three Honorable Mentions awarded in the national 2017 Future of Technology Summit Essay Competition. More than 2,000 essays were submitted by students in grades 5-12 nationwide. Aumaree, who is from Willimantic, wrote an essay exploring the ways in which technology can improve communities and health. She is an acting major at ACT, the arts magnet high school administered by EASTCONN in Willimantic. Learn more about ACT at www.eastconn.org/act.

Colchester & EASTCONN Win CABA Awards

Every year, the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABA) acknowledges schools' efforts to communicate effectively with students, parents and communities about the great work being accomplished in their schools. The annual CABA communications contest, which is open to both private and public schools, draws hundreds of entries statewide.

This year, among districts in the Under-2000 category from the EASTCONN region, the 42nd annual CABA Awards of Excellence for Educational Communications contest acknowledged Colchester Public Schools with an Honorable Mention in the

newsletter category for their staff newsletter "Innovation Nation!" Congratulations!

In the Under-2000 category, CABA honored EASTCONN with four First-Place awards and two Honorable Mentions. First-Place awards went to EASTCONN's 2016-2017 Annual Board Update; its Mobile STEM Laboratory brochure; a communications plan on behalf of the EASTCONN Arts at the Capitol Theater magnet high school; and the 2016-2017 "Welcome Back" PowerPoint for the EASTCONN Executive Board. Honorable Mentions went to EASTCONN's website and its 2017-2018 pop-up calendar.



EASTCONN Connections

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Jacquelyn DuBois



Joelle Garrett



Rose Jaffery



Taylor Koriakin



Joanne Lambert



Shelly Leduke



Cyndi Wells

EASTCONN's Adult and Community Programs staff presented "Preparing WIOA Youth for Work Experience" at the Connecticut Department of Labor's Youth Summit 2017. Adult Programs presenters included Assistant Director of Employment & Training **Suzanne Cimochofski**; Coordinator of Youth Employment & Training **Cyndi Wells**; Out of School Youth Teacher **Shelly Leduke**; and Out of School Youth Job Developer **Joelle Garrett**.

Members of EASTCONN Psychological and Behavioral Consultation Services staff have been selected to present at the prestigious National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) Annual Conference this February. **Dr. Jacquelyn DuBois**, **Dr. Rose Jaffery**, and **Dr. Christopher Barclay** will co-present "Setting the foundation: Effective coaching strategies for classroom management"; **Ashley Boyle** will present "Impact of implementation supports on classroom management and student behavior," "Stress-re-

duction interventions for teachers: What's been evaluated and what works," and "Work smarter, not harder: Learn to get interventions implemented." **Dr. Christopher Barclay** will present "Benchmarks of equality: SWPBIS and the discipline gap"; and **Taylor Koriakin** will present "DBR Connect: Using technology to enhance screening and progress monitoring," "Best practices in school-based services for addressing trauma," "Systematic review of trauma screening measures for children and adolescents," and "Summary of state policies related to school readiness assessment practices."

EASTCONN Speech-Language Pathologist **Joanne Lambert**, M.S., CC-SLP, who is also a member of the EASTCONN Assistive Technology team, has authored an article that will be featured in the Connecticut Tech Act Project's February newsletter. Her article is titled "Let me tell you what I know: Read&Write for Google Chrome helped my son with his writing assignments."

EASTCONN Welcomes New Director of Transportation

Kimberly Bush, who has years of experience in student transportation, has been named EASTCONN's new Transportation Director.

Interim Director John Vitale retired last fall.

"Kimberly brings a diverse mix of experience and innovative ideas to EASTCONN that will help our Transportation Department expand in ways that will greatly enhance the services we offer to our school districts," said EASTCONN Executive Director Gary Mala.

Bush comes to EASTCONN from Specialty Transportation, where she served as Operations Manager for Avon Public Schools transportation and Charter Manager for numerous school districts and private parties. Prior to her experience in transportation, Bush was assistant director for Educational Playcare in Avon.

"I'm most looking forward to the opportunities for growth at EASTCONN and the one-on-one interactions with our customers," said Bush. "I am very hands-on. You'll often see me on the road and at the schools we serve."

Bush emphasized EASTCONN bus drivers' high level of training, as well as the essential role they play in ensuring the efficient and safe operation of the Transportation Department. "We could not be successful without our drivers," she said. "They are often the first point of contact for students. They help set the tone for students each day. Our training protocols will continue to meet the highest standards."

In one of her first moves as Director, Bush extended the dispatch call center hours to ensure that when vehicles are on the road someone will answer the phone if a parent, driver or school district



EASTCONN Transportation Director Kim Bush brings a valuable new mix of experience and innovative ideas to the busy division.

has a concern. Dispatch is now available from 6 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Bush said she is currently exploring the possibility of expanding EASTCONN transportation services to include charter buses for sport teams, school field trips and other functions that require large-vehicle transport.

Last year, EASTCONN transported 616 students daily, traveling a total of more than 2.5 million miles to 110 sites throughout Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

To learn more about EASTCONN's student transportation, contact Kimberly Bush at kbush@eastconn.org or at 860-228-6751.

Mobile STEM Lab Debuts for Rep. Esty Committee at CCSU



Joined by her CT STEM Advisory Board members, U.S. Rep. Elizabeth Esty, far right, toured EASTCONN's Mobile STEM Lab, in-set, following a board meeting at CCSU's Institute of Technology and Business Development in New Britain. Depicted above on the Mobile STEM Lab after their tour are, l. to r., Advisory Board member Edward Savard; STEM Lab Coordinator Dr. Stacey Williams-Watson; EASTCONN Executive Director Gary Mala; and U.S. Rep. Esty. The group examined some of the inventive science learning tools like the "Crazy Traits" figure, above, used by younger children who are exploring heredity and adaptation, and lab equipment like the on-board electron microscope that is used by older students.



Looking Ahead at EASTCONN

Save the Date/s!

Writing & Reading Workshop Summer Institute at EASTCONN for K-8 Teachers and Curriculum Leaders

2-day, 3-day or 4-day workshop options available between **June 20-21, and June 26-27, 2018.**

Gain new insights and strategies that will help your students become critical readers, and dynamic writers and thinkers.

Workshop Presenters:

Kate Roberts, co-author of *Falling in Love with Close Reading*, and of *DIY Literacy*; **Hannah Schneewind**, a certified Connecticut Reading Specialist and former Teachers College staff; and EASTCONN literacy consultants **Linda Kauffmann** and **Tiffany Smith**.

Both new and returning participants are welcome! (Register before April 1, 2018, for a reduced rate.)

To register or learn more, visit www.eastconn.org/summerinstitute

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computer access and connections to human services agencies. In addition, individual guidance and support from skilled career advisors is available free of charge to qualified applicants.

"The strong partnership we have with EWIB and the AJC East has allowed for this blending of employment and education services in the same location," said EASTCONN Director of Adult and Community Programs Rich Tariff. "We are thankful for their vision, commitment and support in making this move happen."

AJC customers can also take advantage of free EASTCONN high school completion classes, free classes in U.S. citizenship and English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) and community education courses. For a full list of EASTCONN Adult Program offerings visit www.eastconn.org/adultprograms.

Learn more about the services offered at EASTCONN's Northeast Learning Center by contacting Suzanne Cimochofski at scimochofski@eastconn.org, or by calling 860-779-3770.



Adults can also boost their job options with EASTCONN's GED classes.

EASTCONN
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