

Proof is in AP Test Numbers as Students Continue to Excel

The 2009-2010 Advanced Placement (AP) test scores for Connecticut high schools involved in the statewide Project Opening Doors (POD) initiative have been released and the results — for the second year in a row — are impressive, officials have announced.

“These latest AP test results for high school students involved in Project Opening Doors are extremely positive,” said Dr. J. A. Camille Vautour, President of POD.



*Dr. J. A. Camille Vautour,
President of Project Opening Doors*

Vautour added that the AP test scores of POD students were so high that they had significantly improved the overall AP test score statistics for the entire state.

“The evidence is in the numbers,” Vautour said.

Now in its third year, POD is a public-private partnership that encourages minority and low-income high school students from across the state to take more math, science and English AP classes and equips them with the supports they need to earn qualifying scores on their AP exams. Connecticut’s POD grant is one of six being funded nationally by the National Math and Science Initiative.

POD provides high-quality professional development for AP teachers, encourages enrollment in math, science and English AP courses, increases instructional time for students, and provides additional resources like equipment and related materials.

In 2009-2010, a total of 3,307 students in 19 high schools across Connecticut enrolled in math, science and English AP

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Left to right, Nancy Pugliese, Chief of CSDE’s Bureau of Educator Standards and Certification, joins EASTCONN’s Curriculum Coordinator Toni Ryan, Director of TEAM training Nancy Celentano, and CSDE TEAM Unit Coordinator Beverly Hartstone during a TEAM District Facilitator meeting in October.

Districts Send In T.E.A.M. To Support New Teachers

TEAM, Connecticut’s new professional development growth program to support and retain beginning teachers, is well underway this fall as the initiative is implemented statewide.

“As they complete the TEAM modules, beginning teachers will not only address immediate and relevant challenges in their classrooms, they will also learn how to analyze and improve their teaching practice in light of their students’ performance,” said EASTCONN’S Nancy Celentano, who directs training for the TEAM initiative.

TEAM (Teacher Education And Mentoring) is Connecticut’s new beginning teacher support program.

Last year, nearly 400 beginning teachers across the state helped pilot TEAM. To date, nearly 6,000 educators have also been trained or updated as TEAM mentors.

This year, about 4,300 new teachers will use the TEAM model to develop new learning, apply it in their classrooms, and demonstrate improved results for their students.

“I found the TEAM module to be very helpful with assisting me to become a better teacher,” reported one pilot beginning teacher in an online survey. “The module process was very straightforward,

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at www.eastconn.org and
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courses through the POD initiative, Vautour said. Of the 19 schools, five were in the EASTCONN region: Bacon Academy, Colchester; Coventry High School; Parish Hill High School, Chaplin; Putnam High School; and Windham High School.

AP test scores of Project Opening Doors students were so high that they significantly improved the overall AP test score statistics for the entire state.

*- Dr. J. A. Camille Vautour,
President of Project Opening Doors*

Statewide in 2009-2010, the percentage increase over 2008-2009 of all AP students (14,157) passing AP exams in math, science and English was 12.6 percent. But to see the impact of POD, that number drops to 9.7 percent if the increase among POD students alone (38.1 percent) is removed.

Similarly, statewide in 2009-2010, the percentage increase over 2008-2009 of POD's minority students passing AP exams in math, science and English was 47.8 percent, while the state-wide average without POD students drops to 31.2 percent. And again, among low-income POD students, the percentage increase was 41 percent, while the statewide increase — without POD students' test scores — was only 18.5 percent.

"We can clearly see that Project Opening Doors is having a profound impact on students taking AP classes and passing AP exams," said Vautour.

Implemented with nine pilot Connecticut high schools in 2008-2009, POD has grown to include 23 Connecticut high schools this year, Vautour said.

To learn more about Project Opening Doors, contact Dr. J. A. Camille Vautour at 860-455-0707 or at cvautour@eastconn.org. Or, reach EASTCONN's Helen Weingart, who facilitates the POD program, at hweingart@eastconn.org, or at 860-455-1571.

Send Us Your Good News!

If you have a newsworthy story about your school, its awards, students or programs, contact

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New Laws, Regional Efficiencies May Help Our Region

Regional cost-sharing and collaboration are more important than ever as state legislators enact and consider new laws to address problems caused by shrinking revenues.

This month, two new Connecticut laws aimed at promoting regional efficiencies in transportation and health insurance took effect and may assist local educators as they build future budgets.

The new state laws allowing regionalized transportation and health insurance bids took effect on October 1st and grew out of the state Legislature's Commission on Municipal Opportunities and Regional Efficiencies (MORE). The MORE Commission was created last winter to explore ways to restructure government and save municipalities money.

"In particular, I'm hoping that boards and towns take a look at the new law relating to pooling their insurance," said state Rep. Joan Lewis, D-8th Dist., who served as co-chair of the Board of Education Functions Committee of the MORE Commission. Lewis represents part of the EASTCONN region.

The state's new transportation law allows local boards of education to make inter-town cooperative arrangements for school transportation. (PA 10-167) The new health insurance law allows municipalities and/or boards of education to purchase health insurance collectively for their employees. (PA 10-174)

Lewis called both new laws "a step in the right direction."

The state Legislature will not be in session again until January, but Lewis said the MORE Commission will continue its work.

EASTCONN already hosts or offers 13 regional groups or councils to help educators and school personnel share successful strategies and create new opportunities for collaboration.

[Editor's Note: Go to www.eastconn.org/councils to view a list and calendar for regional councils and groups.]

EASTCONN is actively exploring regional opportunities in both the school transportation and health insurance. To learn more, contact EASTCONN Executive Director Paula M. Colen at pcolen@eastconn.org, or at 860-455-0707.



K-12 Educators Invited to December AAAS Atlas of Science Literacy Workshop

Educators are invited to attend a three-day "Using Atlas of Science Literacy" workshop Dec. 1-3, 2010, sponsored by the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Project 2061 and co-hosted by EASTCONN.

The AAAS workshop, from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at EASTCONN's Conference Center, 376 Hartford Tpke., Hampton, is aimed at K-12 science and math educators, administrators and curriculum specialists. Team participation is encouraged, but individual registration is welcome. Scholarships are available.

"Having the AAAS workshop here in Connecticut is a wonderful opportunity for local educators to learn how to use an internationally renowned science curriculum resource," said Mary Lou Smith, a member of EASTCONN's Science Cadre.

Register at www.project2061.org/workshops, or call Cheryl Latson of AAAS Project 2061, toll-free, at 888-727-2061.

Learn more about AAAS Project 2061 at www.aaas.org.

EASTCONN Professional Notes:



Dr. Robert Worsham

Dr. Robert Worsham, Behavioral Psychologist, BCBA-D, with EASTCONN's regional Autism Program in Columbia, presented "The Use of the Standard Celeration Chart for Tracking Behavioral and Curriculum Data in an Autism Program" at the Berkshire Association for Behavior Analysis & Therapy (BA-BAT) Conference in mid-October at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.



Elizabeth Aschenbrenner

Elizabeth Aschenbrenner, Director of EASTCONN's Early Childhood Initiatives, is part of a team that represented Connecticut at the Harvard Graduate School of Education's Programs in Professional Education "PreK-3rd: The Foundation for Educational Success" in early October. The institute provides education leaders with the frameworks, research and strategies to develop and sustain aligned preK-3 programs. Joining Aschenbrenner were

representatives from the CSDE, public school districts, and other early childhood-related organizations and non-profit partners. "Connecticut chose to send a state team so that this work could be considered for systemic implementation," Aschenbrenner said, adding, "We anticipate that the team will work together to move this agenda forward."

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simple to follow, and the online portion was great. I loved being able to try new strategies out in my classroom, have educational discussions with my veteran teaching mentor, and observe other district teachers. This was a positive learning experience that helped me grow as a professional."

Since last year, TEAM trainings have taken place at each of Connecticut's Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs) and in school districts statewide.

"Part of the TEAM strategy is to support new teachers closely throughout their first and second years by having them meet regularly with a more experienced teacher, who is a trained TEAM mentor," Celentano said.

One new teacher reported that in her first year, the support from her mentor and administrator was very important. "They helped with inputs and strategies and let me know that it was okay to make errors," she said. "You learn to identify what works with different classes, benefitting yourself and your students."

In conjunction with the one-on-one mentoring, TEAM provides beginning teachers with individual, user-friendly, online workspaces on ctteam.org.

Once new teachers log in to their ctteam.org dashboard, they can use TEAM tools, including an online journal, to reflect on their teaching strategies.

"The beauty of the TEAM journal is how easy it makes self-reflection in an online workspace," said Celentano. EASTCONN staff developed the online system for TEAM.

"I loved the self-reflection aspect of it," said another beginning teacher, "because I feel that a good teacher should reflect on what worked and what didn't work every single day."

Connecticut's TEAM program has been developed through a close, ongoing collaboration among the CSDE, RESCs, the American Federation of Teachers Connecticut (AFT-CT), the Connecticut Education Association (CEA), and representatives from teacher-preparation institutions.

"The right people are at the table," said Celentano.

"We believe TEAM has the power to change how new teachers enter our profession, and perhaps help retain them for longer periods of time, if it's implemented correctly," said Linette Branham, the CEA representative on the TEAM module development committee.

"CEA members are very enthusiastic, and thrilled with the change in direction from high-stakes assessment of new teachers to strong professional growth," said Branham. "CEA has been a strong advocate for the TEAM program all along."

AFT-CT members are also pleased with TEAM, according to Carole Clifford, a member of the TEAM planning committee.

"The experience of working on this committee with such outstanding educators while helping to guide the new program for supporting new teachers continues to be extremely rewarding," Clifford said. "It definitely is a team approach to TEAM."

ECSU Assistant Professor of Reading Maureen McSparran Ruby, D.M.D., Ph.D., another TEAM planning committee member, said, "The manner in which TEAM has been developed, with input from higher education and the professional development experts from the RESCs, provides that important bridge. Learning is about making powerful connections. TEAM is predicated on what teaching professionals need for success in the classroom of the 21st century."

For more information about TEAM, contact EASTCONN's Nancy Celentano at 860-455-0707, or at ncelentano@eastconn.org.

Notes from ACT

EASTCONN's Arts Magnet High School



ACT Scholarship 5K Run
Sat., Oct. 23, 10 a.m.

Register Day of Race, 9-10 a.m., \$20 per person (Walk or Run)

Start: Capitol Theater, 896 Main St., Willimantic

Call 860-465-5636, ext. 2, for Info

Register Online at 5krace@yahoo.com



2nd Annual ACT Haunted House for youngsters
Sun., Oct. 31, 6-8 p.m.



ACT Coffee House

Featuring Student Performances 6:30 p.m., Nov. 4



ACT 7th Annual Open House for Prospective Students
Thurs., Dec. 16, 6:30 p.m.-8 p.m.



ACT Students' Holiday-Themed Musical Performance
Dec. 17, 18, & 19

At the Capitol Theater, 896 Main St., Willimantic

For more information, call ACT at 860-465-5636, ext. 2

Shoreline State Parks Get Facelift, Thanks to Summer Youth



Gov. M. Jodi Rell, center in white, thanked a team of young adults from Danielson and Willimantic who worked together to upgrade structures at Rocky Neck State Park and Harkness Memorial State Park as part of a summer skills-building program. The group, including DEP Commissioner Amy Marrella, second from right, stood on the completed Rocky Neck beach boardwalk after the last section was installed in late September.

This summer at Rocky Neck State Park, a team of 26 young adults from Willimantic and Danielson rebuilt more than 700 feet of deteriorating, weather-beaten boardwalk, making it easier and safer to walk along one of the state's most popular beaches.

In September, the young adults, who were part of the Summer Youth Program, laid the final new section of Rocky Neck beach boardwalk, while Connecticut Gov. M. Jodi Rell looked on.

Rell wanted to show her support, since the Summer Youth Program is connected to her Connecticut Conservation Corps.

"I think you can point to this very, very proudly," Rell told the group, gesturing toward the new boardwalk. "The state could not have completed this job without your help. Nice job!"

Since July, young adults from eastern Connecticut have been employed on restoration projects at Rocky Neck State Park and Harkness Memorial State Park in Waterford, thanks to a collaboration among several agencies, including the CCC, the Eastern

Connecticut Workforce Investment Board (EWIB), the state Department of Environment Protection (DEP) and EASTCONN.

"It's a great partnership," commented Rell.

Similar summer work projects also took place at other state parks across Connecticut.

The young Willimantic and Danielson workers were part of the Summer Youth Program and the JFES Subsidized Employment program. Salaries for the workers and other expenses were provided by a variety of state and federal sources, including federal summer employment funds and stimulus money made available under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

The aim of the summer employment program was to train young, unemployed workers and help them build skills that they can take into the workforce full-time.

For info, contact EASTCONN's Richard Tariff, Director of Adult Services, at rtariff@eastconn.org, or at 860-455-0707.



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EASTCONN, one of six Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs) in Connecticut, has been serving the educational and training needs of schools, organizations, and individuals of all ages in northeastern Connecticut since 1980.

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