

CONNECTIONS

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EASTCONN's mobile STEM science lab will likely be modeled on existing, successful mobile laboratories and programs like the one at Seattle Children's Hospital, depicted above.

“Magic School Bus” to Share Sciences with NE CT Schools

Ever heard of *The Magic School Bus* and Ms. Frizzle, the intrepid cartoon science teacher who takes her students around the world exploring cool science questions?

Well, thanks to a \$12-million, three-year federal Magnet School Assistance Program (MSAP) grant awarded to six eastern Connecticut education partners, many students will soon enjoy the benefits of a real-life “magic school bus,” when plans for a new mobile science laboratory become a reality.

The six grant partners who will share the MSAP funds include LEARN, which is the lead collaborative agent; EASTCONN; Windham Public Schools; New London Public Schools; Norwich Public Schools; and Goodwin College. Each partner has at least one school receiving funds from the grant, which is intended to enhance student learning and access to science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) content.

For example, EASTCONN's Quinebaug Middle College (QMC) will use part of its \$1.4 million portion to create the mobile science laboratory and provide its staff and students with STEM professional development, equipment and other resources. QMC will collaborate with Windham Public Schools' Charles H. Barrows STEM Academy and other area schools.

“We hope EASTCONN's ‘magic school bus’ will generate the same kind of excitement around STEM that Ms. Frizzle's does, but ours will be able to accommodate a greater number of students in its well-equipped labs,” said Toni Ryan,

See **MAGIC SCHOOL BUS**, back page

Supers and Troopers Forum Reviews Latest Laws Affecting Schools, Students



Left to right, Andover Public Schools Superintendent Andrew Maneggia, Trooper First Class Joy Owens, Trooper First Class William Kuckel and Killingly Superintendent Kevin Farr, listened to a presentation by Assistant State's Attorney Francis J. Carino during a Supers and Troopers forum at EASTCONN in the fall.

More than 40 school administrators and state troopers from across northeastern Connecticut attended a Supers and Troopers Forum, where experts shared the latest developments in state and federal laws affecting educators and students in preK-12 schools.

“It was a nice refresher for me,” said Killingly Superintendent of Schools Kevin Farr, during a mid-presentation break, “and I can bring all this information back to my staff.”

Farr was among 25 superintendents and principals, and 15 state troopers who attended the forum, which took place at EASTCONN's Conference Center in Hampton late last fall.

“It is essential that law enforcement officials and school administrators have a good working relationship,” said EASTCONN's Coordinator of Security and Investigations Don Skewes. “By periodically offering these forums where both groups can share information, review laws, ideas and strategies, EASTCONN can help districts provide the safest possible learning environments.”

See **SUPERS & TROOPERS**, page 2

View the EASTCONN Events Calendar
at www.eastconn.org

SUPERS & TROOPERS, from page 1

Skewes had invited the group to hear presentations by Kathleen Wedge, Educational Consultant to the Connecticut State Department of Education, and Francis J. Carino, Supervisory Assistant State's Attorney for Connecticut's Division of Criminal Justice.

Wedge reviewed the latest federal and state laws related to the Family Education Rights Privacy Act (FERPA), while Carino gave a presentation on "Juvenile Laws and Procedures for Police and School Officials."

"This regional forum was intended to provide an opportunity for superintendents and state police to network and communicate by creating greater awareness of the legal issues and the challenges facing schools today," said Tom Cronin, EASTCONN's Director of Education Services.

"EASTCONN is exploring ways to keep abreast of the latest laws and to stay on top of student safety and security, not only on behalf of our districts, but for our own schools and programs," Cronin said.

During the Supers and Troopers forum, Carino shared valuable legal advice, reviewed pertinent aspects of Connecticut's legal system, and discussed school-specific topics related to student behaviors and investigations.

"I think it's very helpful to find information about the latest laws and to know what to expect when working with state police [in legal situations involving schools and students]," said Ellis Technical School Principal Brian Mignault.

"It's also helpful for teachers to know the kinds of things we can and cannot reasonably do," said Fred Pietro, an Ellis Technical School teacher, who is also a member of the Ellis Tech Safety Committee.

"It's a good refresher," said Killingly Resident State Trooper First Class William L. Kuckel, Jr., who is a member of Troop D. He works regularly with the Killingly school system.

Kuckel, Farr, Pietro and Mignault said they have a productive working relationship, and that they appreciate forums where they can hear experts share new legal developments.

To access useful legal resources and references provided by Carino and Wedge, visit EASTCONN's main Web page at www.eastconn.org and click on the "Juvenile and FERPA Laws for Schools" link under Featured Items.

Learn about upcoming Supers and Troopers forums by contacting EASTCONN Coordinator of Security and Investigations Don Skewes at dskewes@eastconn.org, or at 860-576-1763.

EASTCONN Welcomes A New Director of Technology



Andrew F. DePalma, Ph.D., who was previously affiliated with UCONN, will direct EASTCONN's technology division.

Andrew F. DePalma, Ph.D., has joined EASTCONN as its new Director of Technology.

"We are very happy to welcome Andy to the EASTCONN team," said EASTCONN Executive Director Paula M. Colen.

"Our agency and our LEAs will be well-served by his extensive background in data systems, data management, educational and information technology, and distance-delivery. His long association with UCONN as a teaching faculty member and his in-depth knowledge of instructional methods, research, assessment and reporting will bring a fresh and dynamic perspective to our Technology programs and services," she said. "He will undoubtedly strengthen our ability to anticipate technology trends in education."

With 19 years of experience in education and information technology (IT) management at UCONN, DePalma is a former Director of IT at UCONN's Center for Continuing Studies. He was a faculty member in UCONN's Neag School of Education for 10 years and has more than 10 years' experience as an administrator and faculty member in information science and knowledge management. DePalma has taught both undergraduate and graduate-level technology and media courses.

"Judicious application of technology holds vast promise for improving our ability to make decisions and for creating new opportunities," DePalma said.

"EASTCONN is well-positioned to engage the community on these issues, and I look forward to getting out there and doing my part."

DePalma holds both an undergraduate degree in electrical engineering and a Ph.D. in educational psychology from UCONN.

To contact DePalma, reach him at 860-455-1620, or at adepalma@eastconn.org.

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Professional Notes



Aschenbrenner

As part of its statewide educator evaluation and support initiative, the CSDE has invited EASTCONN Director of Early Childhood Initiatives Elizabeth Aschenbrenner to join the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices PreK-2 Work Group. The PreK-2 Work Group will investigate ways to improve learning outcomes through a collaborative focus on early childhood as a key strategy in education reform. The multi-stakeholder group will develop tools and resources to ensure the success of students through the evaluation and support of their teachers.



Hempel Bonneau Cohen Ricci Montigny

EASTCONN's Adult Programs team has been invited by the CSDE to participate in a statewide pilot of the newly released national College and Career Readiness (CCR) Standards. EASTCONN is one of two adult education programs in the state selected to participate in the pilot. The EASTCONN team includes Adult Education staff members Kristin Hempel, Phyllis Bonneau, Sue Cohen, Kristen Ricci and Brandy Montigny.



McQuade

EASTCONN's Early Head Start Coordinator Dawn McQuade is one of 19 Early Childhood professionals in the state to earn an endorsement by the Connecticut Association for Infant Mental Health as a Culturally Sensitive Relationship Focused, Practice Promoting Infant Mental Health Infant Family Specialist, Level 11(IMH-E).



Gozemba



Spada

In December, EASTCONN Early Head Start and Head Start program staff worked with UCONN colleagues to co-present two poster sessions at Zero to Three's national Trainings Institute in San Antonio, Texas. EASTCONN Assistant Director of Early Childhood Initiatives Diane Gozemba, M.S. Ed., M.B.A., and Heather Spada, M.A., LPC, co-presented "Addressing Family Engagement Frameworks through Assessment of Family Needs and Goal Attainment." Dawn McQuade and Gozemba co-presented "Examination of Processes and Outcomes in EHS Play Groups through Partners in Parenting Education (PIPE) Curriculum Lens."

RESC Alliance to Deliver CCSS Support to Schools

EASTCONN will partner with Connecticut's RESC Alliance and the Boston-based Public Consulting Group, Inc., to provide state-funded professional development to area school districts as they implement Common Core State Standards and Smarter Balanced Assessments. EASTCONN is one of six Connecticut RESCs that comprise the RESC Alliance.

Funded by the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), the professional development support initiative, which is free for all Connecticut public school educators, is called The CCSS System of Professional Learning.

The blended learning series will extend over 18 months and include both in-person sessions and virtual learning through Webinars and an online discussion/resource platform.

On January 30th, the Public Consulting Group will launch the CCSS System of Professional Learning. For time-and-place details, contact EASTCONN's Carol Klemyk at 860-455-1569, or reach her at cklemyk@eastconn.org.

Look for stories about CCSS and Smarter Balanced support in future issues of *Connections*. To learn more, contact EASTCONN Director of Teaching and Learning Scott Nierendorf at 860-455-1569, or at snierendorf@eastconn.org.



A recent EASTCONN Regional Staff Development Council (RSDC) featured guest speakers, I. to r., CSDE Chief Academic Officer Dr. Dianna Roberge-Wentzell and CSDE Chief Talent Officer Dr. Sarah Barzee,

discussing CCSS and educator/student evaluation plans; EASTCONN Director of Teaching & Learning Scott Nierendorf, who facilitates the RSDC, joined his guests for a snapshot.



EASTCONN to Host 4 Review Sessions for School Evaluation Plan Revisions

- Dates:** Feb. 20 - Administrator Plans
 Mar. 11 - Education Specialist Plans
 Mar. 24 - Educator Plans
 May 19 - Evaluation Forms Revisions

Time: 8 a.m.-10 a.m.

Place: EASTCONN's Hampton offices

Register: 860-455-1569; cklemyk@eastconn.org

Learn more: EASTCONN Coordinator of Professional Learning Amy Drowne, 860-455-1591, adrowne@eastconn.org; Director of Teaching & Learning Scott Nierendorf, 860-455-1569, snierendorf@eastconn.org.

URSA/NASA Legislative Breakfast

EASTCONN hosted the annual URSA/NASA Legislative Breakfast in mid-December. The annual event connects EASTCONN-region state legislators and superintendents, who discuss upcoming education legislation and other education-related topics. Legislators who attended this year's Legislative Breakfast included state Rep. Danny Rovero, 51st District; Rep. Pamela Sawyer, 55th District; Rep. Brian Sear, 47th District; Rep. Timothy Ackert, 8th District; Rep. Mae Flexer, 44th District; Sen. Tony Guglielmo, 35th District; Sen. Andrew Maynard, 18th District; Sen. Cathy Osten, 19th District; and State Sen. President Pro Tempore Donald Williams, Jr., 29th District.



MAGIC SCHOOL BUS, from page 1

Ed.D., EASTCONN's Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Accreditation.

"For now, we've nicknamed it 'the magic school bus,' but an official name will be chosen later," said Ryan.

"QMC has strong environmental components throughout its curriculum, so when the MSAP grant was being discussed, we came up with the exciting idea of creating a mobile STEM lab to make the world our classroom, a la *The Magic School Bus*," said QMC Principal Gino LoRiccio. "This new lab will provide a wide variety of investigative options for our students."

A mobile laboratory curriculum will be integrated into QMC's environmental science and biology classes. Then, using the mobile lab as a home base, QMC science students will travel to area schools to share their knowledge and collaborate with peers and younger students on STEM-related experiments.

Designs for QMC's mobile lab are being developed. It should be ready in 2014-2015 and will likely be based on successful mobile science lab programs nationwide, much like the ones in Seattle, Wash., and Chicago, Ill.

"There will be enough science equipment on our mobile lab for preK-12 students to conduct ongoing, multiple scientific inquiries simultaneously," Ryan said.

MSAP partners are committed to working together to address issues of cultural competence, educational equity, instructional innovation and student achievement, Ryan said.

To learn more, contact EASTCONN's Toni Ryan at ryan@eastconn.org, or at 860-455-1580.

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