

CONNECTIONS

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EASTCONN staff developers, who helped create the new Common Core Standards Consortium, l-r: Donna Drasch, Helen Weingart, Kelly Doubleday Bush and Director of EASTCONN's Teaching, Learning and Technology divisions, Jim Huggins.

Regional Collaboration Will Help Schools Write CCSS-Aligned Curricula

As part of its ongoing effort to create regional opportunities that maximize local resources and improve classroom instruction, EASTCONN has established a Common Core Standards Consortium to help area schools develop English language arts and mathematics curricula that align with new Connecticut standards.

"Most districts in northeastern Connecticut do not have a director of curriculum," said Jim Huggins, EASTCONN's Director of Teaching, Learning and Technology, "so the responsibility for developing curricula resides with building principals and teachers. This Consortium provides a way of collaborating across the region and assisting all of our districts in developing high-quality, rigorous curricula."

EASTCONN established the regional math and English language arts Consortium in direct response to schools that need assistance with Connecticut's new Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

The Consortium's long-term goals are to promote a deep understanding of the CCSS, help schools develop aligned math and English language arts (ELA) curricula, and work jointly to develop units that not only reflect the academic rigor of new

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Killingly High School Hosts EASTCONN Head Start Site



Breakfast is served! Tori, a Killingly High School student, observes a group of hungry preschoolers in the new EASTCONN Head Start classroom, located in the high school. Students can study preschoolers through a one-way mirror, on the back wall.

A new collaboration between Killingly High School and EASTCONN will give child-development students an authentic look at preschoolers' behavior, thanks to the on-site installation of an EASTCONN Head Start classroom, a child-observation setting, a group of willing administrators and Killingly's Board of Education.

Last fall, EASTCONN opened a new Head Start classroom in Killingly's state-of-the-art high school, featuring not only a light-and-airy teaching space, but also a wall of one-way mirrors through which the high school's child development students can observe about 15 Head Start children as they work, play and learn throughout the day.

High school students will begin their observations of the Head Start youngsters later this winter.

"I think it's a very good opportunity because I want to work with kids," said Jasmine, a senior at Killingly High School, who visited recently with the preschoolers.

"It's pretty unique for a high school to have anything like this for its students," said Martha Goldstein-Schultz, the Family and Consumer Science teacher at Killingly High School, who spearheaded the EASTCONN/Killingly collaboration.

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at www.eastconn.org and
Click on "Workshops, Events & Classes"**

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state standards, but also include the necessary assessments and instructional strategy support.

Franklin is among the dozen-plus districts that have joined the EASTCONN Consortium.

"We're excited to collaborate with other schools along this arduous yet essential journey," said Chris Hempel, principal at Franklin Elementary School. As in other small districts, Hempel and district staff are responsible for writing Franklin's new curriculum.

Participating districts will be asked to assign staff to Consortium work teams, either for math or ELA; teams will be tasked with creating different aspects of the state-aligned curricula. The Consortium will be organized into grade-level clusters for both math and English language arts, for preK-2; grades 3-5; grades 6-8; and grades 9-12.

Curriculum writing will begin this summer. Consortium members will receive all curriculum materials developed by work teams and EASTCONN will offer professional development to support districts' implementation of the new curricula.

"Our region has a long history of collaborating on high-quality projects, so it makes perfect sense during tough economic times that our northeastern Connecticut districts would collaborate like this as they pursue excellence in the classroom," said EASTCONN Executive Director Paula M. Colen.

Districts may join either the English Language Arts Consortium or the Mathematics Consortium, or both. Cost, professional development slots and levels of participation are determined by district size.

For more information, contact EASTCONN's Jim Huggins at 860-455-1569, or at jhuggins@eastconn.org.



Progress on NE CT Regional Health Insurance Collaborative Continues

In mid-December, the results of a recent data collection from 21 school districts and municipalities were presented as 60 representatives from northeastern Connecticut continued discussing a proposed regional health insurance collaborative. The meeting took place at EASTCONN, Hampton.

An insurance consulting firm retained by EASTCONN had done a preliminary cost-savings analysis for the 21 districts and municipalities that submitted their data; results were shared with the group. They also received the latest draft of proposed bylaws for the health insurance collaborative.

A sub-group met in early January to determine whether or not a collaborative could be in place by July 2012.

The whole group will meet again later this winter to discuss the outcome.

For more information about the insurance collaborative, contact EASTCONN Chief Financial Officer John Baskowski at 860-455-0707, or at jbaskowski@eastconn.org.

New Digs in Willimantic for Adult & Community Education

EASTCONN's Willimantic-based Adult and Community Services, as well as its Driver Education program, have moved to the Windham Mills facility at 322 Main St., Willimantic.

Located just a few blocks from the former Adult Education site at 10 Valley Street, Windham Mills provides new classrooms, and more up-to-date spaces for EASTCONN's Adult and Community programs. Windham Mills also offers easy access to students and visitors with disabilities.

Adult and Community Education have taken over the office space in Building 1 that was previously occupied by EASTCONN's Teaching, Learning and Technology divisions; they moved last summer to EASTCONN's new Conference and Meeting Center in Hampton.

For more information, contact EASTCONN Adult and Community Services Director Rich Tariff at 860-455-0707, or at rtariff@eastconn.org.



Hebron, Putnam and Stafford BOEs Shine in Annual CABE Recognition Awards

Congratulations to Putnam and Stafford boards of education for winning 2011 CABE Board Recognition Awards! Congratulations also go to Hebron's board of education for its 2011 CABE Board of Distinction Award. The CABE awards honor boards of education and superintendents who exhibit the most effective leadership, characterized by their ability to work together as a team. The exemplary work of all three boards was celebrated at the November CABE/CAPSS Convention in Mystic, Conn. CABE stands for the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education; CAPSS is the Connecticut Association of Principals and School Superintendents. To learn more about the CABE awards, visit www.cabe.org.



Free Civil War Program at EASTCONN on Feb. 13

Northeastern Connecticut educators are invited to an EASTCONN Teaching American History program on issues leading to the Civil War on Mon., Feb. 13, 2012, from 4 p.m. to 6:30 p.m., at EASTCONN's Conference and Meeting Center, 376 Hartford Turnpike, Hampton. Central Connecticut State University Associate Professor of History Dr. Matthew Warshauer, who has just published a new book, is guest speaker.

To register, contact EASTCONN's Dan Coughlin, at 860-455-1511, or at dcoughlin@eastconn.org. Snow date: Feb. 14.

EASTCONN Connections

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EASTCONN Professional Notes



Maureen Crowley

Maureen Crowley, EASTCONN's Director of Planning and Development, and **Patrick Bradley**, an EASTCONN Data Analyst, presented a workshop titled "Data, Data Everywhere . . ." at the annual November CABE/CAPSS Convention in Mystic, Conn. The well-attended presentation featured an online, interactive data dashboard for analysis and reporting purposes; and a practical, low-tech rubric. Crowley and Bradley agreed that either tool works for gathering data. They shared EASTCONN's strategy for gathering information, the Results-Based Accountability rubric, that asks three questions: How much did we do? How well did we do it? And what has been the impact? The routine use of the RBA tool helps educators focus

their attention on outcomes, and in the process increases their understanding of what is working and what needs to be adapted, refined, and improved, if different outcomes are desired. For more information, contact Maureen Crowley at mcrowley@eastconn.org.



Patrick Bradley

Toni Ryan, EASTCONN's Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Accreditation, successfully defended her doctoral dissertation this fall and was awarded her Ed.D. in Educational Leadership by Central Connecticut State University. Ryan's dissertation, *Consilio et Animis: Tracing a Path to Social Justice Through Classics*, proposed critical pedagogy as a platform for education in ancient language, cultures and history, which would illuminate modern concerns of social justice for secondary school students.



Dr. Toni Ryan



Agency's Autism Program Welcomes Dr. Stein

EASTCONN's Autism Program welcomes Ravit Stein, Ph.D., BCBA-D, a licensed psychologist with extensive training in applied behavior analysis and evidence-based practice across school and clinical settings. With a Ph.D. in school psychology from Lehigh University, Stein completed her clinical internship at the May Institute in Randolph, Mass., where she provided school and home-based consultation on an individual, whole classroom, or system-wide basis for students with autism spectrum disorders (ASD), learning and/or behavior problems. To learn more, contact Dr. Stein at rstein@eastconn.org.



Dr. Ravit Stein



ACT audio/video high school students film a mock accident scene in downtown Willimantic for a Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles video contest on teen safe driving. Real-life Willimantic emergency crews played their parts in the "crash" aftermath.

ACT Film Students Create Local Buzz for DMV Contest

With a wrecked car in the background and surrounded by emergency vehicles, EASTCONN's ACT film students recently attracted curiosity seekers and gawking motorists as cameras rolled and local emergency crews played their roles during a video being shot for a teen safe-driving contest.

"These kids are great," said Paul Pedchenko, a paramedic from Windham Hospital who volunteered to play a role in the ACT students' mock crash scene, staged just off Willimantic's Main Street. "ACT students asked us to participate and we're just happy to help."

ACT students collaborated with local officials and emergency responders in the weeks prior to creating and filming the scene for a Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles video contest. ACT is EASTCONN's Willimantic-based, regional, performing-arts magnet high school.

The DMV has invited Connecticut high school students to enter its fourth annual video contest, which seeks 25-second public service videos promoting teen safety behind the wheel. The student winners, whose schools will split a \$15,000 prize, will be announced next spring; videos will be aired on commercial and cable TV, as well as on Web sites and in theaters.

Contest entries must illustrate a specific community effort to help prevent crashes, injuries and deaths among 16- and 17-year-olds. Learn more at www.ct.gov/teendriving/contest.

Film students from EASTCONN's ACT school have entered the DMV video contest for the last three years; ACT is one of only two Connecticut high schools that have each year earned a spot among the top 10. ACT students' DMV video entry from last year, "Just Drive," earned the school a \$500 DMV prize and a Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE) 2011 Excellence in Communications Award.

Several ACT student groups will submit DMV contest videos this year.

To learn more about ACT or its Audio/Video program or the DMV contest, contact ACT Principal Tracy Goodell-Pelletier at 860-465-5636, or at tpelletier@eastconn.org.

Project Opening Doors, a Statewide AP Program, Reports Good News

The good news keeps coming as minority and low-income students in 23 Connecticut high schools — including six in the EASTCONN region — continue to excel on AP exams.

Project Opening Doors (POD) is a public-private partnership, facilitated by EASTCONN, that encourages minority and low-income high school students to take more math, science and English AP classes. POD is funded by the National Math and Science Initiative.

“We are documenting that if you provide professional development in conjunction with student support, you get consistent, dramatic results in terms of positive student performance on AP exams,” said Dr. J.A. Camille Vautour, president of Project Opening Doors in Connecticut. “We now have three years of data demonstrating a positive trend.”

“When you break down the data for minorities, females and reduced-lunch students, the positive results are even more dramatic,” Vautour said.

Started several years ago, POD’s statewide enrollment has grown from 949 students in nine Connecticut high schools to 4,930 students in 23 high schools for 2011-12.

EASTCONN-region schools involved in POD include Bacon Academy in Colchester; Coventry High School; Killingly High School; Parish Hill High School in Chaplin; and high schools in both Putnam and Windham.

To learn more about POD, contact Camille Vautour at 860-455-0707, or at cvautour@eastconn.org.

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“It’s all modeled on the UConn Child Labs,” she said.

“The nice thing about having this program,” she continued, “is that when students study a unit on typical development in 4-to-6 year olds, they will be able to turn right around and observe Head Start students in the next room.”

When students are not studying the preschoolers, a curtain is pulled across the wall of one-way mirrors.

“I think the initial year is going very well,” said Killingly Superintendent of Schools William Silver. “High school staff and students love having preschoolers in the building, and it presents many opportunities for our students to observe and work with the Head Start children and teachers...and I’m hopeful that it will provide opportunities for mentoring, job shadowing and internships in the future. It is also a win for Killingly parents.”



Even headphones can't keep these pals from communicating during a free period at EASTCONN's new Head Start site in Killingly.

There are three EASTCONN Head Start programs in Killingly, including the high school-based classroom. “We are very pleased by this new collaboration, not only because it’s fulfilling the need to create a new Head Start site, but because it will enable Killingly students to get an earlier start in the child development field,” said Kimberly McClure, EASTCONN’s Assistant Director of Early Childhood Services.

“All the components of a regular Head Start program are in place at this site, so the Killingly students will get a real-world look at an authentic early-childhood classroom without leaving their school. Most students must wait until college for this kind of opportunity,” McClure said.

Students who take the Early Childhood Education Class can earn college credit from Quinebaug Valley Community College’s Career Pathways Program. This year, nearly 100 Killingly students will observe the Head Start students, while about 15 upperclassmen, who have been properly vetted, will be able to volunteer in the Head Start classroom itself.

About 500 area children and pregnant women are served by EASTCONN’s center-based and home-based Head Start/Early Head Start programs. EASTCONN administers Head Start and Early Head Start in Killingly, Plainfield and Putnam, and works in partnership with Vernon Public Schools. Delegate programs in Stafford and Windham are administered by local boards of education.

To learn more, contact EASTCONN’s Kimberly McClure at 860-455-0707, or at kmclclure@eastconn.org.

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