



**2023-24 Annual Report**  
**ELEMENTARY LEVEL BOARD OF CONTROL**  
*Submitted by Dr. Alicia Bowman, CAS Associate Executive Director*  
*Tiffany Caouette, Assistant Executive Director*

Elementary-Level Board Meetings

The Elementary Level Board of Control, chaired by Robert Garry, principal of Hatton Elementary School in Southington, met virtually this year for discussion of topics of interest and concern to members, including social-emotional learning needs, play-based learning support, and Kindergarten start date legislation. The play-based learning work and Kindergarten start date legislation and waiver language became a focal point of all elementary meetings throughout the year. NAESP Zone 1 Director Mike Litke, NAESP Federal Relations Coordinator Garrett Dukette, and NAESP State Representative Scott Nozik also provided the Board with updates at each meeting during the year.

Early Childhood Committee

The committee was composed of representatives from CAS, the Office of Early Childhood, the State Department of Education, and the RESC Alliance as well as administrators in the field. The committee met four times during the year to discuss Kindergarten start date implications across the state and to support the Administrative Roundtable monthly meetings.

The 2023 Elementary Celebration of the Arts

Over 100 elementary schools across Connecticut participated in the Elementary Celebration of the Arts which was held over two evenings in February and honored more than 200 students for their achievements in the visual and performing arts. The celebration was emceed by CAS Assistant Executive Director, Tiffany Caouette, and included remarks from 2024 Kid Governor Cristiano Almeida and a presentation from Flock Theater in New London.

Professional Development

This year, CAS made targeted efforts to diversify professional learning to meet the needs of our audience. One significant focus for professional learning was instructional strategies and practices. Workshops like "Play-based Learning: Meeting Standards & Supporting Executive Function Skills," "Facilitating a Culture of Learning through School-Based Instructional Rounds," and "Create a Culture Focused on Learning Using Learning Blocks" suggest an emphasis on effective instructional methods and practices to enhance student learning and achievement.

Another major focus for adult learning this year was equity and inclusion. Offerings such as "Building a More Welcoming and Inclusive School Using the Welcoming Walkthrough," "Culturally Competent Education: Navigating Towards Equity," and "Understanding and

Addressing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES)" demonstrate a commitment to fostering inclusive and equitable learning environments, addressing the needs of diverse student populations, and promoting social-emotional well-being.

#### LEGO Grant

CAS was fortunate to again receive a grant from the LEGO Foundation to further the Elementary Board's goal of supporting schools as they incorporate play-based learning in the early childhood grades. The grant funded the opportunity for schools in eight districts to work with consultants to design units around play-based learning and build capacity in more classrooms. In addition to the work of the consultants in districts, CAS hosted a workshop on the impact of play-based learning on executive functioning. This workshop has been repeated four times this year in addition to three times last year due to popular demand. Also in the area of play-based learning, site visits to seven sites were organized so that more than 300 participants from the workshops had the opportunity to see play-based learning in action in a classroom. Over 90 administrators and teacher leaders participated in the site visits.

#### Student Activities

The Connecticut Elementary Student Leadership Conferences were held on January 9th and 11th. Over 600 students from 53 schools attended the conferences this year. For more details, see the [CT Student Activities Conference Annual Report](#).

#### 2023-2024 Awards

The Connecticut Association of Schools was excited to present the following awards and recognitions to elementary school members:

- 2024 Elementary School of the Year: CAS 2024 Elementary School of the Year: Natchaug Elementary School, Windham CT / Jeannine Enamait, Principal
- 2024 Elementary Assistant Principal of the Year: Nicole Vibert, West Woods Upper Elementary School, Farmington
- 2024 Elementary Principal of the Year: Scott Jeffrey, Highland Elementary School, Cheshire