

Capt. Nathan Hale Middle School

STUDENTS SHOWCASE TALENT THROUGH REAL-WORLD LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

2009-2010 School Year

A hallmark of our educational program at Capt. Nathan Hale Middle School is the tremendous opportunity students have to develop their skills or showcase their talents through “authentic learning,” which is “real-world” applications. Often these learning situations involve speaking, writing, problem-solving, or creating for actual audiences and purposes. Research shows us that providing students with these opportunities deepens their learning and enhances their motivation. What follows is a summary of the outstanding achievements of Capt. Nathan Hale Middle School students in the 2009-2010 school year. We expect even greater achievement in the 2010-2011 school year!

Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents’ (CAPSS) Superintendent/Student Recognition Award

Grade 8 students Emma Gould and Bram Kyer have been awarded the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents’ (CAPSS) Superintendent/Student Recognition Award. This award is for leadership service to the school, academic prowess relative to ability, and service to others in the community. The presentation ceremony was held in November at RHAM High School in Hebron. Dr. Donna Bernard, Superintendent of Schools, made the presentations as part of a program designed by school administrators to recognize students who have served their schools and communities while maintaining good scholastic progress.

The Superintendent/Student Recognition Program awards a Certificate of Excellence at the discretion of the local Superintendent of Schools according to a distribution formula set for all state school districts. CAPSS, the statewide school superintendent’s professional organization, is based in West Hartford and provides professional development, personal support, state-wide conferences, legislative information, and educational services to its membership. This is the twenty-second year of the CAPSS Superintendent/Student Recognition Program developed to strengthen the relationship between students and school administrators.

Connecticut Association of Schools Scholar Leader Award

The Connecticut Association of Schools established the Scholar-Leader Banquet in 1985 to give public recognition to one Grade 8 boy and one Grade 8 girl from each middle level school in Connecticut who has distinguished themselves in scholarship and leadership in school and the community. This year’s Scholar Leaders are Kaitlyn Sabin and Daniel Bullock. These students will be recognized at a state-wide banquet in early June.

Future Problem Solvers

Two Future Problem Solving (FPS) teams qualified to represent Coventry at the 27th Annual Connecticut Future Problem Solving Program State Conference held in March at E. O. Smith High School. The eighth grade team includes Kaitlyn Sabin, Patrick Dolan, Emma Gould, and Bram Kyer. The sixth grade team includes Peter Thompson, Evan Faulkner, Rachel Dumais, and Jack Galey. These students are coached by Challenge and Enrichment teacher Carla Kennedy. To qualify for competition, students researched and analyzed issues connected to orphaned children. Students then used Dr. E. Paul Torrance’s Creative Problem Solving process to solve related problems set in the future. During the FPS State Conference, top students from around Connecticut were presented with a future scene related to food distribution. At the awards ceremony on Saturday evening, trophies were presented to the first, second, and third place teams and individuals. The first place State Champion team in each division was invited to the International Future Problem Solving Conference at the University of Wisconsin in June.

Future Problem Solvers Connecticut Competition

Students descended upon E.O. Smith High School the weekend of March 26 for the Future Problem Solvers’ annual Connecticut competition. Teams worked together during the course of the year practicing on a series of five topics and were chosen to participate in the State conference based upon their work. Qualifying teams arrived at the state conference and were assigned a topic under the subject of “Food Distribution”. Working with students from other schools across the state, students worked to brainstorm eight challenges with eight solutions, write and apply their criteria, and write up an action plan all within two hours. Taking first place in the Zippy Junior Division was the team of Grade 6 students John Willett and Charles Riordan.

Teams also worked up a skit based upon their solutions, which they acted out on the second day of the competition. It was a way for the students to express themselves, other than through writing. Winning first place in the Intermediate Skit Competition was an eighth grade team consisting of Kaitlyn Sabin, Emma Gould, Patrick Dolan, and Bram Kyer. Taking second place in the Junior Skit Competition was Grade 6 students John Willett and Charles Riordan.

Aside from the team competition and skit performances, scenario writing requires students to write on a topic looking twenty years into the future so their creative skills are put to the test. There were 59 writing scenarios submitted in total this year, and the state champions in each division received an invitation to compete at the International Conference at the University of Wisconsin. The State Champion in the Junior Division was Grade 6 student John Willett.

History Day

On March 20 Grade 7 and 8 students participated in the District History Day Competition held at Manchester High School. This year’s theme was “Innovation: Impact and Change”. Students researched since October an event or invention that had a huge impact on society and changed the world forever! Grade 7 students Joseph Stickels, Adam Grace, and Tucker Bedard placed first for their performance on polio; Grade 8 students Nicole Hosey and Emma Willet placed second for their performance on women’s suffrage, and Grade 8 student Daniel Bullock placed first for his website entry. Grade 7 students Mindy Gosselin, Jamie Moulton, and Jennifer Morrison also entered an outstanding exhibit on the ironing board. Students who placed first, second, or third at the district level competed at Connecticut History Day, May 8, held in Hartford at the Connecticut Historical Society and the Greater Hartford Classical Magnet School. Teacher advisors are Mrs. Susan Mike and Dr. Al Scopino.

On May 8 a number of students participated in the Connecticut History Day Competition held at the Classical Magnet School in Hartford. This year's theme was "Innovation in History". Three Grade 7 students placed second in the junior performance category. The students are Tucker Bedard, Adam Grace, and Joseph Stickles who performed "Polio: The Search for the Cure". These students qualified to go to the National History Day Competition which will be held at the University of Maryland in Washington, D. C. on June 13 through June 17. The students are coached by social studies teachers Mrs. Susan Mike and Dr. Al Scopino.

FOX 61 and CW20 Student News

Grade 8 students Emma Gould and Kaitlyn Sabin won second place in the middle school division for their story entitled, "Yellow Ribbons". The story highlighted Special Education teacher, Christopher Ekstrom, who was deployed to Afghanistan and upon his return he was welcomed to Capt. Nathan Hale Middle School by hundreds of student-made yellow ribbons hung inside and outside of the school. This award comes with a \$1,500 grant to be used for video production equipment for the Challenge and Enrichment Program. Over the past twenty-three years Capt. Nathan Hale Middle School students have been the recipients of over thirty-five FOX61 and CW20 News student awards.

Third Annual Nutmeg Book Celebration

The Third Annual Nutmeg Book Celebration was held on January 28. Students who participated by reading Nutmeg books were treated to a pizza lunch in the Library Media Center. Out of a student population of 477, 450 students read at least two Nutmeg books in the fall to qualify for this pizza celebration. Student recognitions were held at each grade level at the beginning of each lunch.

The top Grade 6 readers were: Jeremie Belekewicz who read 10 books, Rachael Dumais who read 10 books, Alyssa Manzi who read 9 books, Jacob O'Neil who read 9 books, and Carol Wilk who read 8 books.

The top Grade 7 readers were: Jessica Hull who read 19 books, Ashleigh Labbe who read 15 books, Raymond Medina who read 11 books, Ethan Taylor who read 11 books, Dylan Hatch-Krisch who read 10 books, Griffin Sernoffsky who read 10 books, and Tanner Wilson who read 9 books.

The top Grade 8 readers were: Lance Johnson who read 20 books, Trevor Banavige who read 14 books, Kyle Badstuebner who read 11 books, and Jonathan Diamond who read 9 books.

Veterans Day Celebration

Capt. Nathan Hale Middle School held an assembly on November 5 in the Veterans Auditorium to honor all veterans and those who served our country. The featured speaker and honoree was Major Christopher Ekstrom who has served in the Gulf War, Iraq, and Afghanistan for many tours. Major Ekstrom is currently a teacher at the G. H. Robertson Intermediate School and had previously taught at Capt. Nathan Hale Middle School. All veterans and their families were cordially invited to attend this very special event.

Community Problem Solvers Speaks at General Assembly

The Community Problem Solvers Group was selected to speak to the General Assembly in Hartford on April 22 regarding the importance of environmental issues. Grade 8 student Kaitlyn Sabin spoke on behalf of CNHMS. Other students attending the Youth Forum were: Bram Kyer, Emma Gould, Rebecca Pranger, Patrick Dolan, Brooke Vaillancourt, Kevin Huppert, Leah Strycharz, and Carol Wilk.

Community Problem Solvers Team, the "Green Team", Fun Night

The Community Problem Solvers Team, the "Green Team", hosted a family fun night on December 10 entitled, "Go Green Night!" This exciting event featured activities informing people on how to live "green" by saving energy. There were many engaging activities, including how to make paper out of recycled materials, and how to construct a household draft-blocker.

In addition, on November 30, the "Green Team", was awarded a \$1,000 grant from the Connecticut Clean Energy Fund. The funding was used to support the "Go Green Night!" Students on this team include Brooke Vaillancourt, Kaitlyn Sabin, Emma Gould, Daniel Bullock, Bram Kyer, Rebecca Pranger, and Leah Strycharz.

Connecticut Eastern Region Middle School Music Festival

Thirteen band and chorus students auditioned for the Connecticut Eastern Region Middle School Music Festival held at Fitch High School in Groton on February 28. Eight students were selected to the Connecticut Eastern Region Middle School honors band and choir for their high achieving audition scores. The chosen students were Trevor Banavige on percussion, Emma Gould and Lance Johnson on clarinet, Calum Beaulieu on tenor saxophone, Tristan Beaulieu on trombone, Tasha Valentin Jucius and Haley Jacobs for alto voice, and Megan Wochoski for soprano voice. This is the most students from Capt. Nathan Hale Middle School ever selected for this festival representing over thirty-three middle schools in this region.

Musical Arts Conference

Mr. Tony Susi, music teacher and band director, was invited to be an adjudicator and clinician at the Musical Arts Conference concert band adjudication festival on March 26 at Norwalk High School. There were fourteen high school and middle school concert bands performing. Each group had a half-hour performance time on stage with two judges. At the conclusion of their performance, the ensemble had a half-hour clinic with one of the judges. Each band received tape recorded comments and score sheets. This adjudication festival is not a competition but an opportunity for bands to be evaluated by collegiate professors that are active in the Connecticut wind/percussion scenario.

Connecticut Music Educators Association Conference

Mr. Tony Susi was selected to perform at the Connecticut Music Educators Association Conference held at the Connecticut Convention Center on April 9. The Grade 8 band is comprised of forty-four student musicians. Groups who have been selected through audition recordings to be showcased at the conference represent the finest in music teaching and learning in the state and served as exemplary models of performance.

Selected members of the Grade 6 Chorus under the direction of music teacher Eduard Gibbs were also selected to perform at the Connecticut Music Educators Association Conference. CMEA is holding its first annual honor's choir for students in Grades 4 through 6. Each chorus director selected four chorus members from Grades 4 through 6 to participate. Auditions were held, and the Grade 6 students chosen to perform were Chase Martin, Caitlin LaCoille, Haley Jacobs, and Megan Boudreau.

Jazz Band Adjudication Festival

On April 30 the Jazz Band received an "Outstanding Performance" certificate from the Jazz on the Sound Festival at Waterford High School. Three eighth grade Jazz students also received certificates for "Outstanding Soloist". They were Hannah Goodale and Rebecca Pranger on alto saxophone and Leila Yilmaz on tenor saxophone. Several other Connecticut middle school jazz bands participated in this annual adjudication festival.

High Note Music Festival

On June 3 Grade 7 and 8 Chorus and Grade 8 Band participated in the High Note Music Festival hosted at Lake Compounce. The adjudicators were Clarke Saunders from the Hartt School of Music and Roger Thulin, retired band director at Fairfield High School and former president of the Connecticut Music Educators Association. The Chorus, directed by Mrs. Melissa Rood and Mr. Tony Gibbs, received an "Excellent Rating" for their all time high score of 89 out of a possible 100 points. One judge remarked "Overall a pleasant sound. Good consistent quality of high notes throughout!" The Grade 8 Band earned a Superior Rating with a score of 96. One judge commented, "This is a wonderful sounding band – you have put in the effort to not only get a strong technical performance but also a very musical one. Excellent choice of pieces." Other participating middle schools included Chappaqua, New York; Parsippany, New Jersey; Lyme-Old Lyme, Danbury, Norwalk, New Fairfield, and Meriden from Connecticut.

Stock Market Game

More than 1,000 Connecticut students participated in the spring 2010 Stock Market Game, Newspaper in Education program, sponsored by the Hartford Courant. Student teams start with an imaginary \$100,000 to buy or sell stocks. Grade 7 students Cameron Ennis and Andrew Dimock placed first in the Grade 7-8 middle school division. The program ran for ten weeks and ended on April 30.

Foodshare Fundraiser

Grade 6 students donated \$369.40 to Foodshare from their fundraiser dance held on December 11. Grade 6 students Carol Wilk and Abbie Zadrozny were the chairwomen of the Fundraising Committee. As part of their participation in the Mosaic Program, a grant-based program administered by EASTCONN, all sixth students have been involved in a service learning project to assist in alleviating hunger in the community at large. A representative from Foodshare, an organization that works to create effective solutions to end hunger in all 42 towns of Hartford and Tolland counties, recently made a presentation about their operation and aspects of hunger to the sixth grade students. As part of this project, a food collection drive was conducted.

Haitian Health Foundation Fundraiser

Staff and students raised a total of \$2,027.20 to be given to The Haitian Health Foundation to help the victims of January's devastating earthquake in Haiti. Students, Kevin Maulucci, Kyle Hoxie, Tyler Brown, and Skye-Marie Hoffman, along with teachers, William Cherniske, Kristin Fowler, and para-educator Doreen Pelletier, coordinated the fundraising efforts. During the two-week fundraising event, one day was set aside to challenge teachers against students for the most money donated. Students won by contributing more than \$100 over the teachers!

Blood Drive

In conjunction with the American Red Cross, sixth and seventh grade students co-sponsored and conducted the 12th annual blood drive on April 20. All students helped in some manner. This is a great service learning project. In addition to this academically rich project, the students were given the opportunity to volunteer, learn what it meant to give blood, as well as learn about career fields that may one day interest them. This was a unique experience for all students, especially those who volunteered to work at the blood drive as an escort, registration attendant, babysitter for donors with children, or server in the canteen area. Students helped to sign up over 85 appointments with 62 pints of blood collected for the blood drive. Over the course of the 12 years this blood drive has been held at Capt. Nathan Hale Middle School, 1200 pints of blood have been collected for the American Red Cross!

United States Environmental Protection Agency's 38th Annual Paul G. Keough Earth Artists Program

Hundreds of students from all over New England in kindergarten through sixth grade entered the poem and poster contest sponsored by the United States Environmental Protection Agency. Grade 6 students Austin Gallimore, Brady Dalton, Danastalgia McDermott, Jake Michaels, Reilly Keenan, Camryn Sarles, David Feltenberger, Rhett Rogers, Charles Riordan, Emma Grimaldi, Patrick Walker, and Rachael Dumais won in the poem category. Grade 6 students Morgan Palmer, Hannah Kloo, and Lexi Chmielecki won in the poster category. The students will be honored at a recognition ceremony at The University of Hartford's Lincoln Theater in Hartford on May 27.

University of Connecticut's Martin Luther King, Jr. Poster Contest

Fifty-seven Grade 6 and 7 students under the direction of art teacher Scott Rhoades participated in the UNESCO Chair and Institute of Comparative Human Rights and University of Connecticut's Martin Luther King, Jr. Committee's poster contest. The top honors in the Grade 7 and 8 Category from Capt. Nathan Hale Middle School were: First Place Amanda Cabral, Second Place Abigail Pepin, and Third Place Jennifer Morrison. Additionally, top honors in the Grade 4 through 6 Category from Capt. Nathan Hale Middle School were: First Place Morgan Clark, Second Place Alexandra Hanrath, and Third Place Alison Akerley. Students from across the state were invited to participate in the contest and were asked to use their artistic expression to highlight what contributions they felt young leaders made in advancing or promoting a great realization of King's Dream. Award winners were honored at a reception at UCONN on Martin Luther King's birthday on January 18.

"Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day" Essay Contest

The Connecticut Dept. of Veterans' Affairs announced that March 30, 2010 was designed by Governor Rell as Connecticut's "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day". To commemorate this day, an essay contest was conducted for students in Grade 6 through 8 on why March 30, 2010 should be designated as "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day". Grade 6 student Rachael Dumais was the winner of this essay contest. A ceremony was held at the 612 Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Coventry.

Creative Communication Publication

Thirty-nine sixth grade students were published in the Creative Communication summer 2009 edition. Students have also been recognized on a page in the book dedicated to "Honor Schools" which means out of the hundreds of schools entering the contest, only a small percentage of schools are given this award. The purpose is to recognize schools with excellent language arts programs.

A Celebration of Young Poets Anthology

Forty-three Grade 6 students had their poetry selected to be published in the anthology, A Celebration of Young Poets. Less than fifty percent of the poems submitted to the anthology are selected to be published. In judging thousands of poems each year, judges have found that the single most important factor in creating a quality poem is the quality of the instruction. Creative Communications from Logan, Utah, has found that schools with excellent language arts programs have a much higher percentage of their students' poetry accepted. The list of students that have been accepted to be published this year represents talent, hard work, and dedication from both the teachers and the students.

Letters About Literature

The Center for the Book in the Library of Congress in partnership with Target Stores presents "Letters About Literature", a national reading and writing promotion program for children and young adults sponsored in cooperation with the Connecticut Center for the Book. This writing program supports students in developing reading and writing skills while providing them with an authentic learning experience in writing for a real-world audience. More than 600 entries were received in the Level II, Grades 7 and 8 category. Grade 8 student Lauren Marshall was one of the 65 state finalists.

National Geographic Bee

Grade 8 student Alex Boutin qualified to represent CNHMS at the state level of the National Geographic Bee by passing the written exam. On January 22 Alex won the verbal geographic exam with over thirty students participating to qualify for the state level. The state Geographic Bee was held in April at Central Connecticut State University. One winner from each state and territory advanced to the national competition, which was held in May at the National Geographic Society headquarters in Washington, D.C.

People to People Student Ambassador Program

Grade 7 student Samantha LaFountain, after being invited to enroll, was accepted into the People to People Student Ambassador Program, an educational travel program founded by President Dwight D. Eisenhower. Samantha will explore Western Europe for three weeks in July this summer as a member of the Connecticut delegation.

Winning Recipe

Grade 7 student Dylan Morris was selected in November as the local Red Robin restaurant winner for his gourmet burger creation. Dylan's gourmet burger creation was chosen from thousands of entries in the local Manchester area. Dylan's creation was considered for Red Robin's Top 10 Championship Event held in December. Dylan received special recognition and a gift certificate from Red Robin.

2009 Weightless Flights of Discovery

The Northrop Grumman Foundation selected Adrienne Manzone, a sixth grade science teacher, to participate in the 2009 Weightless Flights of Discovery program in Norwalk on September 29. The Weightless Flights of Discovery allows educators the opportunity to prepare for and participate in micro- and zero-gravity flights to test Newton's Laws of Motion with the purpose of taking their experience back into their classrooms to energize their students in math and science. "The need to ensure the United States' competitiveness in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) remains a real challenge for our future," said Sandra Evers-Manly, President of the Northrop Grumman Foundation. "Students' pursuit of these areas begins with a passion for science and math, and teachers like Adrienne play a key role in igniting that passion; we want to provide educators with the tools and training necessary to inspire the next generation of scientists, mathematicians, engineers, and teachers." For the fourth consecutive year, the Northrop Grumman Foundation is partnering with Zero Gravity Corporation to offer the Weightless Flights of Discovery program, one of several initiatives the Northrop Grumman Foundation sponsors in support of promoting education and student interest in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields. Selected teachers participate in a full-day orientation program several weeks before their flights. Teachers then work with their students to develop experiments to be conducted in flight, in environments.

Teacher Has Article Published

Grade 7 math teacher, Jennifer McDougall, recently had an article entitled "Getting a Bead on It" published in the December 2009/January 2010 issue of Mathematics Teaching in the Middle School distributed by the National Council for Teachers in Mathematics. The activity discussed in the article was a lesson completed in the spring of 2008 with an eighth grade class. The goal of the lesson was to create a hands-on activity that would make linear equations more concrete. Ms. McDougall wrote the article with her professor from Keene State College, Ms. Beverly Ferrucci.

612 Book

Capt. Nathan Hale Middle School was invited to attend the Red, White, and Blue Service Ceremony being held at the First Congregational Church in Litchfield, Connecticut, on May 23. This year's focus was to recognize the veterans of the Vietnam War. One of the program highlights was to trace the story of the Connecticut Vietnam Veterans Memorial erected in Coventry, Connecticut. Mr. Thomas Dzicek, retired Challenge and Enrichment teacher at Capt. Nathan Hale Middle School, retold the story of the "612" project which started at the school. The 612 book of biographies was written by students in Grades 6 through 8 which highlighted interviews of family and friends of all 612 Connecticut Vietnam veterans who sacrificed their life in the line of duty. This project inspired Jean Risley and the creation of the Connecticut Vietnam Veterans Memorial. At the conclusion of the program, Grade 6 teacher Patti Wilson, and secretary, Ann Lang, were on hand to share the 612 book, pictures, and a PowerPoint presentation to highlight the students' interactions in the classroom and with veterans' families.

AED Donation

On April 23 the PTO sponsored a Walk-A-Thon for students in Grades 6 through 8 during the last two periods of the school day. The PTO contributes to school initiatives and endeavors and is most supportive of programs at CNHMS related to teaching and learning. Some of the proceeds from the Walk-A-Thon along with proceeds from the Grade 6 Mosaic charity fund paid for one portable Automatic Electro Defibrillator (AED) unit used for outdoor sporting events. Prompted by new Connecticut State regulations, Raymond Eldridge Safety Officer for Coventry Public Schools approached the school about the need for four AED units.

The Coventry High School Parents' Club funded an additional AED unit and the trainer to support the use of these AED units for middle school and high school sports. Ms. Nancy Levinson, Athletic Director at Coventry High School and Capt. Nathan Hale Middle School, authorized the funding of equipment so that the AED units could be used on children.

Girls' Soccer Team North East Middle School Athletic Conference Champions

Boys' Basketball Team North East Middle School Athletic Conference Champions

Student Achievement Test Results

Coventry Public Schools' administrators presented the district's student achievement results to the Coventry Board of Education on October 8. Although schools in every community continue to have areas for continued growth and focus, Coventry's efforts with its web-based ABC curriculum project appear to be having a positive effect on student test results. Overall, staff, students, and parents are pleased with the recently released achievement information.

As we look at a three-year trend, the advances in our students scoring in the "proficient" category are of particular note:

MATH

Number of Grade 4 at or above proficient is 96.1%.
Number of Grade 6 at or above proficient is 92.6%.
Number of Grade 7 students at or above proficient is 89.5%.

READING

Number of Grade 5 students at or above proficient is 86.7%.
Number of Grade 7 students at or above proficient is 86.3%.

WRITING

Number of Grade 4 students at or above proficient is 92.4%.
Number of Grade 5 students at or above proficient is 93.4%.
Number of Grade 6 students at or above proficient is 89%.

SCIENCE

Number of Grade 5 students at or above proficient is 94.7%.
Number of Grade 10 students at or above proficient is 87.8%.