

# CONNECTIONS

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April 2007

## New, Full-Day Arts Magnet Option for Ninth-Graders



*The Capitol Theater's main stage, where students can learn about both performance and technical theater at the arts magnet school.*

EASTCONN officials have announced that they will offer a brand-new, full-day, arts magnet high school beginning with ninth-graders at Willimantic's Capitol Theater, starting this fall. EASTCONN plans to expand the program to grades 9-12 in the future.

"We're very happy that along with our part-day arts magnet high school, we can now offer this full-day arts magnet school for ninth-graders at the Capitol Theater," said Paula Colen, EASTCONN's Executive Director. "Both ACT programs will run concurrently at the Capitol Theater," she said, "allowing us to serve more students who are interested in both performing arts and technical-theater courses."

The new full-day arts magnet school will serve ninth-graders Monday through Friday, as they receive rigorous instruction and support in core academics each morning, Colen said. Then, four

See **ACT FULL-DAY**, page 4

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## Schools Gain Advantage With ELL Consortium Membership

### *Professional Development is Key*

Membership in EASTCONN's English Language Learners Consortium has nearly doubled in two years, from eight to 15, as eastern Connecticut school districts strive to meet strict government standards and the needs of an ever-growing number of non-English-speaking students.

The ELL Consortium's facilitator agrees that the key to districts' success in teaching English-language-learners lies in professional development.

EASTCONN coordinates the ELL Consortium, which now includes Ashford, Bozrah, Colchester, Columbia, Lebanon, Mansfield, Pomfret, Plainfield, Putnam, Region 19, Sprague, Stafford, Tolland, Willington and Woodstock.



*"As our state immigrant population continues to grow, the ELL Consortium allows school districts to pool resources, share services and devise strategies for serving our new English-language-learners."*

— Rothenberg

*Elaine Rothenberg, EASTCONN's ELL Consortium Facilitator*

"What we're seeing in eastern Connecticut is simply part of a national trend," said Elaine Rothenberg, EASTCONN's ELL Consortium Facilitator. "As our state immigrant population continues to grow, the ELL Consortium allows school districts to pool resources, share services and devise strategies for serving our new English-language-learners."

A recent report from the U.S. Department of Education

See **ELL CONSORTIUM**, page 4

# Calendar of EASTCONN Events



## APRIL 2007

- 13 ..... ConnCASE — Response to Intervention: Discussion of a Three-Tiered Model for Delivering Intervention Using Student Performance Data to Drive Instructional Practices
- 24 ..... Introduction to CT Energy Education: Explore 5 Lessons & Activities (for new attendees)
- 25 ..... Science Council
- 27 ..... URSA/NASA

## MAY 2007

- 1 ..... Life Stories as a Teaching Tool
- 2 ..... Regional Staff Development Council
- 3 ..... Strength Through Form: A Study of Bridge Design
- 3 ..... Connecticut Data Conference, Crowne Plaza Hartford-Cromwell
- 17 ..... Technology Council
- 18 ..... ConnCASE

## JUNE 2007

- 26, 27 & 28 ..... Developing Resources and Materials to Create Lifelong Readers and Prepare Students for Success on the CMT

## JULY 2007

- 18 ..... Motivating the “Plugged-In” Generation
- 25 ..... Using Picture Books to Build Vocabulary & Teach Author’s Craft
- 30 ..... InspireData for the Classroom for Grades 4-8
- 31 ..... InspireData for the Classroom for Grades 9-12

## AUGUST 2007

- 1 ..... SMART Board in the Classroom
- 7 & 8 ..... Create a School Web Site with Dreamweaver
- 8 ..... Integrating “Author and Me” QAR Strategy Instruction into Your Reading Lessons
- 23 ..... Getting Kids Excited About Reading: Spice It Up a Notch with Nutmeg!

*Note: Workshops fill up quickly. Please reserve seats early. EASTCONN workshops are subject to change. Please e-mail the EASTCONN Conference Office at [conferenceoffice@eastconn.org](mailto:conferenceoffice@eastconn.org) for more information about any of the meetings and workshops listed here. Register online for any of the above workshops at [www.eastconn.org](http://www.eastconn.org). Click on Workshops.*

**ACT Full-Day Arts Magnet High School for Ninth-Graders**

### **OPEN HOUSE**

for all interested eighth-grade students and their families

**Tuesday, April 10, 2007, 6:30 p.m.**

Capitol Theater, 896 Main Street, Willimantic, CT

For more information, call 860-465-5636 or go to

[www.eastconn.org/ACT](http://www.eastconn.org/ACT)

# Events at the Capitol Theater, 896 Main Street, Willimantic

## ACT STUDENT PRODUCTIONS:

### ■ Spring Dance Show

Wednesday, April 11th & Thursday, April 12th, 7 p.m.

### ■ *The Odd Couple*, directed by senior Kory Thibeault

Wednesday, May 2nd, Thursday, May 3rd, 7:30 p.m.

### ■ Spring Showcase

Thursday, May 10th, 7 p.m.

Tickets for the above are \$5 for each performance.

Call Elizabeth, 860-465-5636, ext. 2, for tickets.

## Willimantic Cinema Project MOVIES:

### ■ Friday, April 20<sup>th</sup>:

6:45 p.m. *Labyrinth* (PG)

9 p.m. *Baraka* (NR)

### ■ Friday, May 18<sup>th</sup>:

6:45 p.m. *Roger & Me* (R) Local historian, Bev York, will introduce the film and lead a post-show discussion on the rise and decline of Willimantic’s own textile industry.

9 p.m. *Diarios De Motocicleta (Motorcycle Diaries)* (R)

Tickets are \$5 at the door for each featured film above.

[www.cinema.WindhamArts.org](http://www.cinema.WindhamArts.org)

860-450-1794



# ACT Video Contest 2007

Young filmmakers, from middle to high-school, are invited to submit their original videos to the **ACT Video Contest 2007** by Thursday, April 26. Six gift certificates, from \$100 to \$25, will be awarded. Winning videos will be announced and aired at the **ACT Video Fest, Thursday, May 31, at 7 p.m.**, at EASTCONN’s Capitol Theater, 396 Main Street, Willimantic.

Entrants must be present to win. Call ACT for rules and guidelines at 860-465-5636, ext. 2100. Entry form and rules also at [www.eastconn.org/ACT](http://www.eastconn.org/ACT).

ACT is EASTCONN’s part-day, arts magnet high school. ACT students are not eligible to participate in this contest.

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# Planning & Development Partnerships Bring Millions To EASTCONN Districts



*“We’re just a phone call away,” says EASTCONN’s Maureen Crowley, who has helped the region win \$6.6 million in grants.*

Effective grant-writing is just one way that EASTCONN’s Planning and Development partners with school districts to make innovative ideas and desires a reality.

“True planning and development is...looking to the future,” said Maureen Crowley, EASTCONN’s Director of Planning and Development.

“EASTCONN wants to discover how we can best help districts reach their long-term educational goals,” she said, “and grants provide us with a very concrete way to help.

“Ultimately,” Crowley said, “as their partners, we’re as invested in our districts’ success and as committed to their outcomes as they are. We want districts to know that we’re just a phone call away and that we’re here to help them in any way that we can.”

Since early 2003, Crowley has helped the region win more than 60 federal and state grants totaling \$6.6 million, which has benefited most of EASTCONN’s 36 member-towns in some form or another – either through the innovative Interdistrict Grants (involving more than 6,000 students and 30 school districts), or through a variety of alternative school design and/or curriculum initiatives, or a multitude of grants for technology improvements, professional development, online teacher-support, curriculum assessment and development, summer youth-programs, after-school programs, and a wide-range of programs aimed at improving the lives and educational outcomes for students.

“But,” Crowley said, “grant-writing is just a means to an end. It’s just one more way for us to partner with school districts to help them obtain the services and programs they need to improve student outcomes.

“The fact is, not every planning initiative costs a lot of money.”

Often, small districts have asked for assistance where fund-

ing is scarce, Crowley said, and EASTCONN has been able to deliver inexpensive solutions. EASTCONN has helped enrich small-school science programs, for example, by bringing together UConn Cooperative Extension Service and EASTCONN curriculum experts to create a sustainable natural habitat on school grounds.

“And it didn’t cost a lot of money or require a grant,” Crowley said.

One of the most popular grants EASTCONN’s Planning and Development helped obtain is the \$700,000 Teaching American History Program (TAHP), which is now in its third year. (Windham Public Schools is the grantee.) TAHP has offered more than 60 history teachers, grades 5-12, a series of workshops, seminars and field trips focused on using primary sources and local resources to teach history.

Another successfully funded program is the VESTA/Life-long Learning Project, a collaborative after-school program for students and their families in low-income housing developments in Willimantic, Moosup and Norwich.

“There, we were also able to establish computer labs and to provide computers to families who completed their instructional programs,” said Crowley. “It was a wonderful thing to develop a full-family learning enclave within these communities.”

Crowley also helped plan and develop EASTCONN’s Autism Services, which bring together an interdisciplinary EASTCONN team of experts with school districts to create individualized programming and/or support for students placed on the autism spectrum.

EASTCONN recently forged a successful planning and development partnership with Region 19, which wanted to create new learning opportunities for students who were not thriving in the traditional high school environment.

“Region 19 approached us and asked, ‘Is there a way we can develop a new learning environment for these kids?’ We worked with them to develop a model, which was presented to the community and it got terrific feedback,” Crowley said.

“Maureen is a very talented and high-energy person who has been a wonderful resource for our district,” said Bruce Silva, Superintendent of Schools for Region 19. “Her excitement and enthusiasm for the projects that she has worked on with us has been contagious. In spite of her busy schedule, she always finds time to stay current on the most recent research...and brings fresh ideas to the table.

“She can always be counted on to produce a product that exceeds everyone’s expectations,” Silva said.

Crowley said she is in the process of seeking grant funding to support that Region 19 initiative.

Ultimately, Crowley said she wants EASTCONN’s Planning and Development to provide schools and communities with increased opportunities.

“We see our role as creating learning opportunities that don’t currently exist, and enriching those that already do. I want all learners to reach their personal goals, to realize their potential. That’s what EASTCONN is all about.”

Contact Maureen Crowley at 860-455-0707 or at [mcrowley@eastconn.org](mailto:mcrowley@eastconn.org).



## ELL, continued from page 1

found that English-language-learners are the fastest growing segment of the school-age population in the United States.

Rothenberg, who recently joined EASTCONN, is a TESOL-certified educator (Teacher of English to Speakers of Other Languages), who taught non-English speakers for 13 years, mainly in West Hartford.

"I had one elementary school in West Hartford, for example, that had 85 ELL students – about 16 percent – and many were new arrivals in the city with almost no English, from all over the world," Rothenberg said.

"I dealt with children and families from South America, Korea, Vietnam, China, India, Nepal and Sudan," she said.

Among the many languages spoken by ELL students in eastern Connecticut are Russian, Chinese, Spanish, Tagalog, Farsi and Turkish.

Rothenberg said that if a school district only has a small number of enrolled ELL students, it's difficult to muster the expertise and funding required to serve those new ELL youngsters properly under the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) guidelines established by federal law.

"However, if districts join the consortium, they realize some real advantages. For example, member schools obtain their ELL professional development for free," said Rothenberg.

"For member districts, there are also three consortium meetings annually, where teachers are brought up-to-date on the latest national requirements and we share important ELL classroom strategies. One of the big advantages is that we [EASTCONN] loan the *LAS Links* test to consortium member towns so they don't have to purchase it, saving them thousands of dollars." Schools are required by law to administer the *LAS Links* test to each ELL student. If needed, Rothenberg can contract with districts to administer the test.

Right now, Rothenberg is creating a whole series of ELL professional-development workshops for teachers in the region. Consortium members may enroll for free.

Starting next fall, Rothenberg is planning ELL workshops that include "ELL Strategies for Classroom Teachers," "LAS

Links Training," "Special Education and ELLs – When Do We Test?" and "Coaching and Model Teaching for ELL Paraprofessionals and Tutors."

Rothenberg is able to offer some of these workshops in-district. "That way, I reach a much larger number of educators in each school," said Rothenberg, "and I can have a far greater impact."

Recently, Rothenberg led an ELL workshop in Colchester.

"Elaine did a very good job presenting to our staff from three schools," said Tracy Chambers, the ELL teacher at Colchester's Bacon Academy.

"In Colchester we have a very varied ELL population," Chambers said, adding, "We have had students from Russia, China, Korea, the Ukraine, India, Vietnam, Poland, Africa, etc. The students range with American-English comprehension from zero to moderate. Often the parents of our students attend the Adult Education ELL classes offered at Bacon Academy. The ELL consortium helps to support our ELL services in our school district."

To learn more about the ELL Consortium or ELL programs, contact Elaine Rothenberg at 860-455-0707, or by e-mail at [erothernberg@eastconn.org](mailto:erothernberg@eastconn.org).

## Did You Know? New Database Eases ELL Reporting

EASTCONN has developed a new database that can help districts collect and organize ELL information for State reports. Part of PSIS Reporter, a database tool developed by EASTCONN to help districts respond to the State Department of Education's Public School Information System (PSIS) initiative, the ELL software produces a report in the format that the State requires. For more information, contact EASTCONN's John Kalinowski at 860-455-0707, or at [jkalinowski@eastconn.org](mailto:jkalinowski@eastconn.org).

## ACT FULL-DAY, continued from page 1

afternoons a week, part-day ACT students (grades 9 through 12) will travel from their home high schools to join the ninth-graders in exploring a challenging arts curriculum together.

ACT currently serves 48 students in grades nine through 12, while the new, full-time high school will serve about 20 additional ninth-grade students. Full-day ninth-graders will receive a minimum of 180 days (more than 1,000 hours) of instruction and will come from eastern Connecticut's public schools. The full-day program will serve students who are interested in all aspects of the arts, not just performance.

Arts courses for both the full-day ninth-graders and part-day ACT students will explore traditional performing arts subjects like dance, acting and voice, as well as behind-the-scenes subjects like creative writing, videography, sound and lighting, set-building, costume design and directing.

EASTCONN officials said they intend to expand the new full-day program to include grades nine through 12. Applica-

tions for the full-day arts high school, which are available in all eighth-grade guidance offices, are due Friday, May 4, 2007. Applications are available from ACT and may also be downloaded at [www.eastconn.org/act](http://www.eastconn.org/act).

An open house for parents of prospective students that will include an information session and tours will take place on Tuesday, April 10<sup>th</sup>, starting at 6:30 p.m.

ACT, which stands for Arts at the Capitol Theater, opened in 2004, after a \$17 million state-funded grant allowed EASTCONN to renovate the abandoned theater and turn it into a state-of-the-art performing arts and teaching facility. Part-day ACT students can earn high school credit for courses in a variety of performing arts-related subjects.

To learn more about the full-day arts high magnet school, contact EASTCONN's Director of Student Services, Thomas F. Cronin, at 860-455-0707, or by e-mail at [tcronin@eastconn.org](mailto:tcronin@eastconn.org).

## Coming to a School Near You: Free Mystic Seaport Programs!

*But Time is  
Running Out  
and Teachers  
Must Act  
Quickly*



Thanks to a \$75,000 outreach grant, Mystic Seaport will bring its interdisciplinary History-to-Go and Science-To-Go programs to classrooms across eastern Connecticut – for free! But teachers must sign up soon. The grant runs out in June.

Aimed at all grade levels, Mystic's History-To-Go outreach initiative offers schools a variety of programs filled with artifacts, photos and fascinating stories as Mystic Seaport educators share Connecticut's past with school-age youth. The Science-To-Go programs about weather originate in the Seaport Planetarium. Seaport role-players in full costume accompany the Mystic educators.

Seaport educators can present as many as three, one-hour programs in a day, and every program is tied to the Connecticut Content Standards, said Lisa Marcinkowski, Mystic's Director of Education. For descriptions of Mystic Seaport programs, visit [www.mysticseaport.org](http://www.mysticseaport.org), or call 860-572-5322 to obtain a brochure.

The Mystic outreach programs are intended for schools that might not otherwise be able to afford them, or for schools from any community with a decreased ability to offer enrichment programs to students.

EASTCONN educators are very familiar with Mystic Seaport.

"Students have benefited from Mystic Seaport in so many

ways," said Cindy Curry, EASTCONN's program coordinator for the highly successful Interdistrict programs, *Waves of History* and *Mosaic*.

"The people I have worked with at Mystic Seaport are so helpful and willing to provide resources," Curry said. "The experience continues to influence the way I look at immigration and education."

One very popular History-To-Go program, called "A Sailor's Life," uses artifacts, primary documents and historical photographs from Mystic Seaport collections. As school children unpack a sailor's sea chest, they use what they find to piece together a colorful picture of a 19<sup>th</sup>-century sailor's life.

"Kids can try on the clothes and see things like hardtack, which the sailors used to eat," said Marcinkowski.

The free Mystic Seaport outreach programs were made possible by a grant from the Connecticut Health and Educational Facilities Authority, Marcinkowski said.

For reservations and information about how to request a classroom program, call Group Reservations Coordinator Jen Fritzen at 860-572-5322. Teachers should mention their need for financial assistance when arranging for the program. The process is a simple one, said Marcinkowski.

For more information, contact Mystic Seaport's Lisa Marcinkowski at 860-572-0711, ext. 5270, or e-mail her at [lisa.marcinkowski@mysticseaport.org](mailto:lisa.marcinkowski@mysticseaport.org)



## Arts Academy Students to Sing at ECSU Presidential Inauguration

Youngsters from EASTCONN's Capitol Theater Arts Academy in Willimantic have been invited to sing during inauguration ceremonies for Eastern Connecticut State University's sixth president, Dr. Elsa Nuñez, on Friday, April 13th.

"What an honor to be invited to represent our community," said Adam Friedman, director of the Capitol Theater Arts Academy. The Academy is housed in Willimantic's Capitol Theater, which is also home to ACT, the arts magnet high school run by EASTCONN.

The Arts Academy offers arts courses to area residents of all ages.

"Our Arts Academy students, who are from all over eastern Connecticut, will gain so much by working with professionals and college students," Friedman said.

As many as 29 youngsters, ages 8-13, who are enrolled in an Arts Academy's musical theater class, will join the ECSU Concert Chorale and Brass Ensemble in singing "Common Threads," under the direction of ECSU Assistant Professor of Music and Director of Vocal Studies, Dr. David Belles.

"I'm thrilled, absolutely, that these students will be involved," said Belles. "It's an exciting opportunity for them to be part of a grand, academic celebration...it's not often that students have the opportunity to participate in the inauguration of a president."

Nuñez, who was unanimously elected last May, is the first Latina president of a Connecticut state university.

Visit [www.eastconn.org/capitoltheaterarts](http://www.eastconn.org/capitoltheaterarts), or call Adam Friedman at 860-465-5636. Learn more about the ECSU inauguration from Edward Osborn, ECSU University Relations, at 860-465-5043, or at [osbornE@easternct.edu](mailto:osbornE@easternct.edu).

In the spirit of sharing new ideas and resources, EASTCONN is delighted to highlight recent additions to and new information on its Web site.

## New New New New New

### Summer Camp & Disney's Musical Give Kids Theatrical Experiences

Check out the Capitol Theater Arts Academy's Summer Musical Theater Camp—For students entering 4<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> grades, this exciting camp offers students a chance to perform onstage, or work behind the scenes in a fully staged, Broadway-style production of Disney's *High School Musical*. July 9 through August 3, Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.; Performances August 2, 3 & 4. [www.eastconn.org/capitoltheaterarts](http://www.eastconn.org/capitoltheaterarts)

### 2006 ACT Fund Annual Report Online

Read the just-released 2006 ACT Fund Annual Report and learn more about EASTCONN's part-day, arts magnet high school, its generous donors, volunteers and the talented students who are pursuing their artistic dreams. [www.eastconn.org/ACT](http://www.eastconn.org/ACT)

### CAT (Connecticut Administrator Test)

The 2007-2008 CAT Registration Form is now available. Go to: [www.eastconn.org/CAT.htm](http://www.eastconn.org/CAT.htm).

### The *Yousay* Wiki Site, *Café Conversations* and More...

Launched recently, EASTCONN's Standards-Based Learning Center site ([www.eastconn.org/SBLC](http://www.eastconn.org/SBLC)) provides educators with up-to-date information and resources like these:

- *Yousay*, the SBLC's new wiki site, provides a mechanism for teachers to give students a voice in their own learning.
- Visit *Café Conversations* and learn how to use them as a tool to promote student conversations.
- *Spice it Up a Notch with Nutmeg*—Four student projects, related to the goal of integrating research, technology and reading skills are now posted.

(On August 23<sup>rd</sup>, attend a workshop called "Getting Kids Excited about Reading: Spice it Up a Notch with Nutmeg!" Visit [www.eastconn.org](http://www.eastconn.org) and click on "Workshops" to learn more.)

### Schmoker is Keynote at Connecticut Data Conference May 3

Attend the Connecticut Data Conference: Data Analysis for Continuous Improvement, featuring keynote speaker Dr. Mike Schmoker, on Thursday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>. Keynote: "The Opportunity: From 'Brutal Facts' to The BEST Schools We've Ever Had." 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., at the Crowne Plaza, Hartford-Cromwell. Visit [www.eastconn.org](http://www.eastconn.org) and click on "Workshops" to learn more and to register.

*Sponsored by the Connecticut Alliance of Educational Service Centers ([www.ctresc.org](http://www.ctresc.org)).*



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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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