

# CONNECTIONS

*Education News From Northeastern Connecticut*

volume 31, number 2

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

January 2011



*Students concentrate on a classroom assignment during a typical morning at Northeast Regional Program's new site in Putnam.*

## Northeast Regional Program Settles Happily Into New Site

"I love these kids and I love this program!" exclaimed Northeast Regional Program (NRP) Director Denise Resonina during a recent visit to NRP's bright, new Putnam facility.

NRP, which is located at 508A Pomfret Street, opened its doors in November 2009 after EASTCONN combined two special education programs into one.

"We've really created a rhythm here," Resonina said, as she walked along NRP's cheery hallways. Students could be seen working in quiet, busy classrooms surrounded by books, computers, desks and colorful bulletin boards.

NRP offers an integrated, K-12 day-treatment program for students with social, emotional and behavioral issues. The program provides both on-site clinical support and a popular vocational program for its high school students.

"This building and our new program have galvanized and inspired everyone, students and teachers alike," Resonina said. "We want all our students to experience personal success here."

See **NORTHEAST REGIONAL PROGRAM**, page 4

## In this issue

- ☼ NRP Settles Into New Site in Putnam ..... 1
- ☼ Region 8 Superintendent Uses Regionalism..... 1
- ☼ EASTCONN Magnets Recruit New Students..... 2
- ☼ McREL's Tim Waters to Present Workshop Jan. 19th..... 3

## Regionalism: An Opportunity For Savings and Local Control



*A self-proclaimed realist, Region 8 Superintendent of Schools Robert Siminski says regional initiatives can create local savings.*

As Superintendent of Schools for Region 8, Robert Siminski views regionalism as a means to an important end: preserving quality programs, maintaining local control and saving money.

"I'm always on the lookout for opportunities to regionalize," Siminski said recently, "and I am continually examining ideas and seeking new opportunities for collaboration and cost-savings."

Region 8 provides middle- and high-school programs for the towns of Hebron, Andover and Marlborough.

"Communities want control of their individual schools, and regionalism can provide opportunities for both savings and control," Siminski said.

For example, Region 8 already is a member of the 21-town EASTCONN Adult Education collaborative that provides free, mandated programs like high school completion classes, ESL, citizenship, a student expulsion program and basic skills courses.

"The programs we participate in have provided additional opportunities for residents and [out-of-school] students that we really couldn't provide on our own," Siminski said.

Region 8's high school completion program at RHAM is especially "near and dear to my heart," said Siminski, "because it gives the non-traditional student in our region an opportunity to get his diploma, which opens up a myriad of opportunities."

Siminski said that Region 8 students have also benefitted from the 21st Century Skills Grant, a regional, competitive, Title IID Grant, which EASTCONN wrote for the two magnet high schools it administers (Arts at the Capitol Theater and Quine-

See **REGIONALISM**, page 2

View the EASTCONN Calendar  
at [www.eastconn.org](http://www.eastconn.org) and  
Click on "Workshops, Events & Classes"

## REGIONALISM, continued from page 1

baug Middle College), as well as Regional Districts 8, 11, and 19. Each district received funding for equipment, software and technology tools to support authentic, project-based learning in science, math, language arts and technology, as well as funding for professional development.

But according to Siminski, creating a health insurance pool may hold the greatest promise for future savings.

"Regionalized health insurance could provide one of the biggest opportunities for savings in our region," said Siminski.

Recent Connecticut legislation allows schools to pool their insurance policies. Siminski has joined EASTCONN and other area administrators to explore regional health insurance plans.

"We're still in the formative stages, and it's probably at least 18 months in the future, but if the regional insurance pool were to happen, it would allow a measure of independence to school districts, yet enable them to share the benefits of pooling.

"I'm a realist," Siminski continued, "and regionalizing health insurance would be a way of mitigating those inevitable insurance premium increases and may allow us to stabilize or reduce rates. Plus, regionalized insurance pools would also allow districts to provide the same level of quality and services without creating issues around collective bargaining."

He also has high hopes for regional transportation, although he describes it as "a tough nut." Region 8 has several transportation contracts that expire at different times. Siminski has joined EASTCONN staff to explore related challenges like creating a common, regional school calendar, which he said would also benefit teachers in his region.

A common, regional calendar would also create more opportunities for regional professional development.

"We're always looking for subject-specific professional development because providing that for ourselves is cost-prohibitive," he noted.

Some of the other regional options on the horizon for Region 8?

"I'm looking forward to participating in an online credit recovery program, which would be possible regionally, but just too much work to do alone," said Siminski.

To learn more about regionalization opportunities in north-eastern Connecticut, contact EASTCONN Executive Director Paula M. Colen at 860-455-1505, or [pcolen@eastconn.org](mailto:pcolen@eastconn.org).



## EASTCONN Wins 7 CABA Communications Awards

EASTCONN has won seven awards in the CABA 2010 Awards of Excellence for Educational Communications contest. EASTCONN 1st-places: 2009-2010 *Connections* quarterly newsletters; *Celebrating Learning 2009-2010*; "I have a student..." 2010; *Programs, Products & Services Directory*, 2009-2010; and ACT promotional video, 2009-2010. Honorable mentions: 2008-2009 Annual Report; and [www.eastconn.org](http://www.eastconn.org).



*Students in the ACT Costume Construction class, proudly display the results of their first sewing project - tote bags.*

## EASTCONN Magnets Recruiting; First Seniors To Graduate in June

As EASTCONN's magnet high schools actively recruit students for 2011-2012, principals of both programs say they are eagerly awaiting the spring when they will honor their school's first, full, graduating class.

The EASTCONN magnet schools include Arts at the Capitol Theater (ACT), 896 Main Street, Willimantic, and Quinebaug Middle College (QMC), on the Quinebaug Valley Community College campus, 742 Upper Maple St., Danielson.

"We're really looking forward to our first graduation in June," said ACT Principal Tracy Goodell-Pelletier. "It will be a wonderful milestone for the program and all of our students." ACT will graduate 14 seniors.

ACT is seeking about 35 incoming 9th-graders for next fall. There are also openings in grades 10-12. ACT will enroll between 125 and 130 students in 2011-2012. The application deadline is Feb. 4, 2011. To learn more about ACT or to schedule a tour, contact Goodell-Pelletier at 860-465-5636 or [tpelletier@eastconn.org](mailto:tpelletier@eastconn.org).

"Everyone is anticipating a great celebration when our 30-plus QMC seniors graduate this spring," said QMC Principal Gino LoRizzo.

QMC is actively recruiting students for 35 openings in 10th grade; there are also openings in 11th and 12th grades. QMC's open house is Wed., Jan. 19, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. Enrollment will reach 105 students in 2011-2012. A new building by 2013 will increase the population to 225. The application deadline is April 29, 2011.

Contact LoRizzo at 860-412-7400 or [glorizzo@eastconn.org](mailto:glorizzo@eastconn.org) for more information.

### EASTCONN Connections

Writer/Editor: Teddie Sleight ~ [tsleight@eastconn.org](mailto:tsleight@eastconn.org)

Assistant: Cindy Laurendeau ~ [claurendeau@eastconn.org](mailto:claurendeau@eastconn.org)

### Communications Department

Dotty Budnick, Director ~ [dbudnick@eastconn.org](mailto:dbudnick@eastconn.org)

### EASTCONN Administration

Paula M. Colen, Executive Director

**EASTCONN**, 376 Hartford Turnpike, Hampton,  
CT 06247, 860-455-0707 FAX: 860-455-0691

## EASTCONN Professional Notes:



**Richard Tariff**, Director of EASTCONN's Adult Services program, has been honored with the 2011 Connecticut Association for Adult and Continuing Education (CAACE) Distinguished Leadership Award for his contributions to adult education. Tariff will receive his award during the CAACE Conference in April.



**Toni Ryan**, EASTCONN's Curriculum Coordinator, presented a talk on "Consilio: A Rationale for a Critical Pedagogy of Classics" at the New England Philosophy of Education's Annual Meeting, held this fall at Central Connecticut State University.



**Lisa Taylor**, a teacher at Arts at the Capitol Theater (ACT), has been named the 2011 Elizabeth Shanley Gerson Reader of Irish Literature at UConn, and has received the American Association of College Professors Faculty Development Award, which will fly Taylor to Ireland in March for the Irish launch of her newly published poetry

collection, *The Other Side of Longing*, which she co-authored with award-winning Irish poetess Geraldine Mills. The book is published by Arlen House, and is available through Syracuse University Press.



## EASTCONN Breaks Ground on Addition



*On a chilly, grey day in November, EASTCONN held a small ground-breaking ceremony at its Hampton offices, at 376 Hartford Tpke., where a new addition is being built to accommodate the agency's professional development and conference needs. The new construction project, which is being built behind the existing site, will add 15,700 square feet of office and workspace, conference space and meeting rooms. Depicted above are EASTCONN's executive board members, building committee members and various agency staff, as well as representatives from FIP Construction, Inc., of Cheshire, and the architectural firm, Silver/Petrucelli and Associates, of Hamden.*

## Dr. Tim Waters, President and CEO of McREL, to Present Workshop Jan. 19: "Changing Odds for Student Success"

Educators are invited to attend a workshop by Dr. J. Timothy



*Dr. J. Timothy Waters*

“Tim” Waters, President and CEO of McREL, who will present “Changing the Odds for Student Success: What Matters Most” on Wed., Jan. 19, 2011, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., at EASTCONN, 376 Hartford Tpke., Hampton.

Waters will share McREL's innovative and dynamic “What Matters Most” framework, giving insights into schools, districts and programs that can change the odds for students. Waters will identify five areas where improvements can lead to dramatic gains in student achievement and provide

guidance to those who want to answer the question: “Of all the things I might do, what matters most?”

“Tim Waters knows as much as anyone in the United States about what a transformed school system needs to be and what needs to be done to transform the schools we have now,” said Joseph J. Cirsuolo, Ed.D., Executive Director of The Connecticut Association of Public Schools Superintendents (CAPSS).

“Tim also understands profoundly the crucial role that leaders need to play to bring about that transformation,” Cirsuolo said.

Waters joined McREL (Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning) in 1993 as the Deputy Director following 23 years in the K-12 public school system. He has established a reputation as an innovator and leader of education improvement and reform.

Waters has written numerous articles on education leadership and co-authored “School Leadership that Works” (2005) and “District Leadership that Works” (2009). To learn more about Waters, visit [www.mcrel.org](http://www.mcrel.org) and click on About Us and Staff Directory.

Workshop registration fees are \$50 for individuals and \$125 for teams of three or more. Register online at [www.registereastconn.org](http://www.registereastconn.org). For more assistance or more information, e-mail [conferenceoffice@eastconn.org](mailto:conferenceoffice@eastconn.org), or call 860-455-1533.



## Head Start Sites Get NAEYC Nod

Three more EASTCONN Head Start sites — two in Killingly and one in Plainfield — have achieved the highly prized accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

The newly accredited EASTCONN Head Start sites are located at 1620 Upper Maple St., Dayville; at Northeast Learning Center, 111 Connecticut Mills Ave., Danielson; and at Plainfield Early Childhood Center, at 651 Norwich Rd., Plainfield. EASTCONN's Head Start program at 33 Wicker St., Putnam, achieved NAEYC re-accreditation last fall.

Learn more about Head Start and NAEYC from Kim Lewendon at 860-455-0707, or at [klewendon@eastconn.org](mailto:klewendon@eastconn.org).

# NORTHEAST REGIONAL PROGRAM

continued from page 1

Twelve EASTCONN-region districts send students to NRP, which currently enrolls 27 students. NRP has added five new students, just since the beginning of the year and several others are waiting to be processed.

Districts in the region have only good things to say about the program.

“Killingly schools have a longstanding relationship with Denise Resonina and we have always been impressed with her work and dedication to her kids and her program,” said Killingly Director of Pupil Services Bonnie Brouwer.

“She’s amazing to work with,” Brouwer continued. “Her staff has top-notch training and there’s always communication with the LEAs, so that anything that happens, you’re aware that day, immediately. They are very, very strong advocates of their students and the education that they’re receiving is valid.”

James Blair, Plainfield’s Director of Pupil Personnel, also praised NRP.

“The Northeast Regional Program provides a program where students can be successful,” Blair said. “They provide a structure and environment that is not always available in a public school. Their ability to get students into the community and help them realize that they have worth and value is a credit to the staff and administration.”

Resonina said that NRP’s vocational program is one of its great strengths.

“It’s one of the biggest draws for our high school students,” she said. Students visit area businesses or hear guest speakers every week. Students may also choose from a variety of local

internships and job opportunities.

“We are really pushing to get students into the community, to give them the real-life connections between their schoolwork and their lives,” Resonina said. “When students ask, ‘Why are fractions important?’ I say, ‘Let’s go out into the community and find out.’ ”

“Going into the community and seeing how math, English, science, geography and other subjects are relevant — it makes school fun,” Resonina said.

Resonina also reported two new developments at NRP for 2011.

“We’ll be building a new playscape for our younger students this spring,” Resonina said, “and may also offer a 2011 summer program focused on remediation, social skills development and community experiences.”

To find out more about NRP, call Denise Resonina at 860-963-3328, or reach her at [dresonina@eastconn.org](mailto:dresonina@eastconn.org).



## URSA/NASA Annual December Legislative Breakfast Draws 32



*Twenty school superintendents from northeastern Connecticut discussed budgets and other concerns with 12 state legislators at URSA/NASA’s annual Legislative Breakfast meeting at EASTCONN, Hampton, in December. Left to right, state Rep. Pamela Z. Sawyer, R-55th Dist., chats with state Rep. Kevin Ryan, D-139th Dist., and state Senate President Pro Tempore Donald E. Williams, Jr., D-29th Dist.*



**Congratulations** to the Eastern Connecticut Workforce Investment Board, which was recently honored for its service to the region with the Connecticut Economic Resource Center’s “Celebrate Connecticut Economic Growth Award.”



**Congratulations** to Thompson’s Mary R. Fisher Elementary School, whose fourth-graders’ 20% gain on the 2010 CMTs have earned a “3rd best in state” ranking among Connecticut’s 596 elementary schools. The ranking is part of a statewide “report card” on school performance gains in meeting state goals across all subjects, issued by the Connecticut Coalition for Achievement Now (ConnCAN), an education advocacy group. Visit [www.conncan.org](http://www.conncan.org) and click on Report Cards to learn about more other northeastern Connecticut schools that have made notable gains, including those in Columbia, Hampton, Killingly, Sterling and Willington, which ConnCAN has ranked among the state’s top 25.

U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Non-Profit  
Permit No. 86  
Willimantic, CT 06226

EASTCONN  
376 Hartford Turnpike  
Hampton, CT 06247  
Where Learning Comes to Life