

West Hartford Public Schools  
Office of the Superintendent  
50 South Main Street  
West Hartford, CT 06107

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# CONNECTIONS

With the West Hartford Public Schools

*Connections* is a districtwide publication presented to you by the Office of the Superintendent, West Hartford Public Schools, 50 South Main St., West Hartford, Connecticut 06107

## Coaches Association Honors WHPS Athletic Director

As Director of Athletics for the West Hartford Public School system, Betty Remigino-Knapp has been a leader, an articulate spokeswoman and a passionate supporter for athletics in our region. This devotion earned her the honor of being named Director of Athletics of the Year at the Connecticut High School Coaches Association's annual recognition dinner May 12.



Betty Remigino-Knapp

It also makes her impending retirement a challenging one for West Hartford. For the past 20 years, Remigino-Knapp's responsibilities have included the development, coordination, and evaluation of all aspects of the athletics program for West Hartford Schools. As Director of Athletics for both Conard and Hall high schools, she supervised and supported 30 programs, 136 coaches, and 1,600 student-athletes. Before arriving in West Hartford, she was the Division 1 head coach for women's track and field and cross country at the University of Connecticut, winning three Big East Championship track and field titles and 15 New England track and field championship titles.

***Her expertise and her commitment to excellence will be greatly missed.***

### Distribution Of *Connections*

An on-line version of *Connections* With the West Hartford Public Schools is now available at <http://www.whps.org/connections.pdf>. If you do not wish to have a copy of *Connections* mailed to your home, please email [connectionsout@whps.org](mailto:connectionsout@whps.org) with your name, address, child's name and school. Thank you.

## Upcoming Events

**King Philip Middle School, Select Ensembles Concert**  
May 23, 7 p.m.

For more information, call 860-233-8230

**Hall High School, Spring Instrumental Concert**  
May 24, 7 p.m.

For more information, call 860-232-4561

**Hall High School, Spring Choir Concert**  
May 25, 7 p.m.

For more information, call 860-232-4561

**Sedgwick Middle School, Pops Concert**  
May 25, 7 p.m.

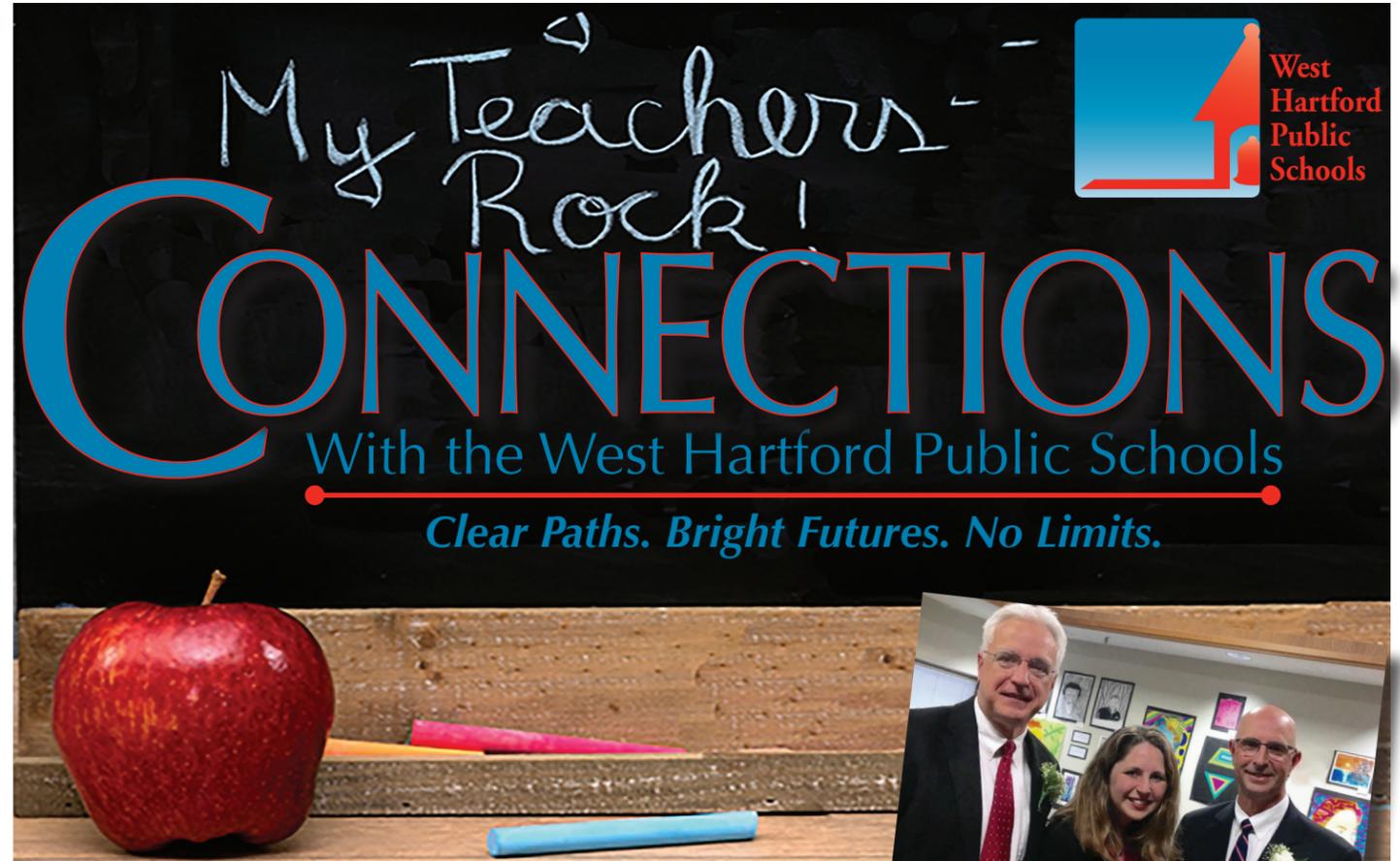
For more information, call 860-570-6500

**Bristow Middle School, Select Ensembles Concert**  
June 2, 7 p.m.

For more information, call 860-231-2100

### School Concerts

Throughout the spring, there are concerts at all schools in town. Call individual schools for specific information.



## Announcing the Teacher of the Year Finalists

The process to nominate the Connecticut Teacher of the Year has begun, and West Hartford has chosen three finalists so far: Conard High's Jackie Corricelli, King Philip Middle School's Eric Fisher, and Aiken Elementary's Steve O'Brien. Each year, teachers nominate other teachers for the program, which recognizes and honors excellence in teaching. Nominees are then asked to submit a resume, an essay, and recommendations.

Finalists are taped giving a regular classroom lesson. With that information, the field is narrowed to three, and the Teacher of the Year Committee interviews the three finalists. According to the website for the Connecticut Teacher of the Year, the process does not try to pick the 'best' teacher, but to identify one teacher to serve as a "visible and vocal representative of what is best in the profession."

Here is a little bit more information on each of the finalists:



**Jackie Corricelli** began teaching math and AP computer science at Conard High School in 2010. For seven years before arriving in West Hartford, she was a math teacher at East Windsor High School. She began her career as a systems engineer at Raytheon.

**Education:** bachelor's degree, mathematics and statistics, University of Connecticut; master's degree, mathematics secondary education, Westfield State University

**Awards:** 2013 Presidential Award for Excellence in Math and Science Teaching Winner; 2012 John McCormack Award for Teaching Excellence, Connecticut Runner-Up; 2009 Connecticut Teacher of the Year Semifinalist

**Other Accomplishments:** Independent consultant for the College Board; advisor to Bits and Bytes, a club that mentors Smith STEM School Students in beginning programming skills; advisor to Girls STEMming Up, a club that creates events that help girls understand what STEM stands for and how girls can use it to change our world; advisor for Mega Moody Math Challenge (junior team); member of National Council of Teachers of Mathematics and the Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics

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4th Issue

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### A Look Inside:

- *Get Involved with Diversity Efforts*
- *Celebrating 50 Years of Project Concern*
- *New Director of Secondary Education Named*
- *Focusing on Citizenship*

## Teacher of the Year Finalists (continued from page 1)



**Eric Fisher** began as a special education teacher in West Hartford in 1995, became a math teacher in 2006, and is now the Grade 7 team leader at King Philip Middle School. Before joining the West Hartford Public School System, he was a certified accountant for four years with KPMG.

**Education:** bachelor's degree, business administration, University of Connecticut; master's degree, secondary education, Central Connecticut State University; graduate certification in Special Education, Central Connecticut State University

**Awards:** Previous nominations for West Hartford Teacher of the Year, 2006, 2012, 2013; GEM awards from KP staff and administration

**Other Accomplishments:** TEAM mentor since 2012; assistant varsity Golf Coach Hall High School since 2002; member of Superintendent's Advisory Committee, 2013-15; co-coach of PBIS Committee, 2013-14; SBAC (Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium) Performance Task Writer, 2013; co-chair, Student Assistance Team, 2004-2007

**Steve O'Brien** has been an intermediate grades teacher at Aiken Elementary School since 1993. In 2014 and 2015 he also taught Rocketry at The Summer Place at the University of Hartford. Before joining the West Hartford School System, he was a houseparent at the Ethel Walker School for four years. In 1986, he served as the assistant press secretary for the re-election campaign of U.S. Sen. Christopher Dodd.



**Education:** bachelor's degree, political science, University of Connecticut; master's degree, elementary education, Connecticut State University

**Awards:** Award of Excellence from Praxis for scoring in the top 5 percent of all test takers; Certificate of Appreciation from the Town of West Hartford for service on the Curriculum and Professional Development Council (CPDC) from 2011-14; nominated for Teacher of the Year, 2003

**Other Accomplishments:** president of Simsbury Theatre Guild, 2006-2009, member since 1999; member of the Connecticut Reading Association for 10 years; West Hartford Leadership Council, inaugural group; Aiken School Improvement Council

## Focusing on Citizenship and Community Awareness

Thanks to the work of the West Hartford Public Schools curriculum teams, a PreK-5 social studies learning plan is being developed. It will support students to:

- Develop an understanding of self and social awareness, along with the rights and responsibilities of citizens
- Determine ways we can address problems individually and collectively to improve the communities to which we belong

West Hartford teachers will gain an understanding of the plan through professional learning workshops this fall. During the next two years, the curriculum teams will further refine the social studies curriculum by integrating it with English-language arts. This includes the study of community, local history, foundations of government and economics and ways in which people make a difference. We will also begin teaching an updated PreK-5 progression of geography knowledge and skills to support the plan at the elementary and secondary levels.

## Diversity is Important. Here's a Chance to Get Involved.

The Office of Diversity Advancement is seeking parent involvement.

The rich tapestry of diversity in the West Hartford Public Schools makes the district a special place for students and educators to learn and grow. This past year, the Office of Diversity Advancement was created. Its mission: to sustain a diverse educational community that is inclusive and equitable. Under the leadership of Roszena Haskins, Director of Continuing Education and Diversity Advancement, the Office of Diversity Advancement established the Equity and Diversity Council (EDC). The Council is examining the status of our district's practices, policies and procedures, and making recommendations for systemic and sustainable improvements.

**We need the community to become involved! The Office of Diversity Advancement invites families and community partners to become a part of the effort.**

During the 2016-17 school year, the Equity and Diversity Council will focus on the following priorities:

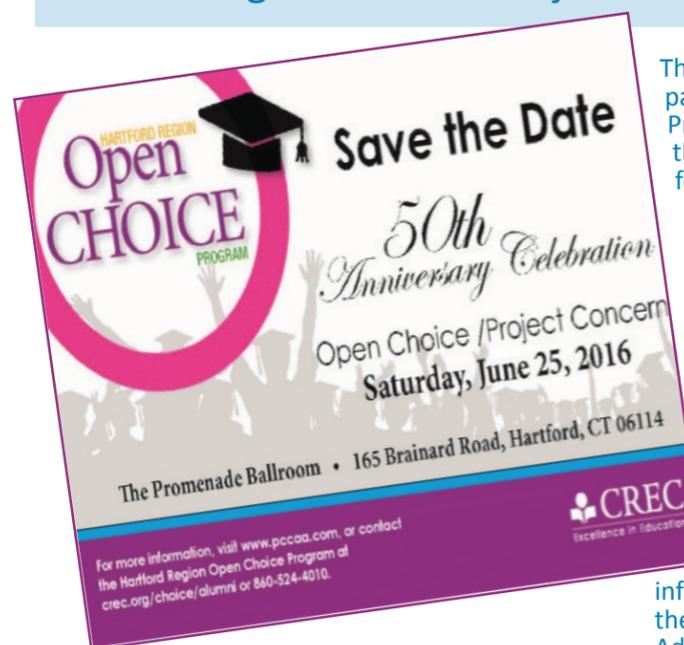
- Increasing the diversity of the certified staff in the school system
- Increasing the capacity for cultural competence among our educators in all areas of teaching and learning
- Increasing student access and opportunities for engagement, leadership and achievement
- Engaging families in the work of the Equity and Diversity Council

For more information, please visit the EDC webpage under 'Offices' on the whps.org website, or call Roszena Haskins, director of Diversity Advancement, at 860-561- 6900. *Your input matters!*



WHPS Future Educators of Diversity

## Celebrating 50 Years of Project Concern/Open Choice



The West Hartford Public Schools is proud to be one of the founding participants in the Project Concern/Hartford Region Open Choice Program, welcoming Hartford students since 1966. For 50 years, the Open Choice program, an interdistrict public school program, focused on three goals:

- Improve academic achievement
- Reduce ethnic, social and economic isolation
- Provide a choice of educational programs for public school students in the Hartford region

The program has had a positive impact on our schools and our community. Students have acquired skills in communicating and making friends across racial lines. The program has reduced stereotypes and increased academic achievement for students of color.

**Celebrate this wonderful milestone with us.** For more information, please visit the Open Choice webpage under 'Offices' on the whps.org website, or call Roszena Haskins, Director of Diversity Advancement, at 860-561- 6900.

## New Director of Secondary Education Named



**Anne McKernan**, a longtime leader in education and the Director of Leadership Development in the Talent Office of the State Department of Education, will join the West Hartford Public Schools as Director of Secondary Education starting July 1.

In announcing the appointment, Superintendent of Schools Tom Moore noted that McKernan was chosen from a highly competitive pool of applicants.

"Anne has been an exceptional leader throughout her career, and her knowledge of curriculum and instruction will be a great asset to the West Hartford Public Schools," he said. "We welcome Anne back home to West Hartford, where she not only grew up and became a teacher, but currently resides with her family and is a West Hartford Public Schools parent."

McKernan's experience as an educator is extensive. She was Chief Academic Officer of the Enfield Public Schools, Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Education at the Capitol Region Education Council (CREC), principal of an inter-district magnet school, chairwoman of a social studies department, and a classroom teacher at the high school level. She began her teaching career at Hall High School in 1985. With a bachelor's degree in Political Science from Fordham University, a master's degree in Public Policy from Trinity College, and her sixth year certification in Educational Leadership from Southern Connecticut State University, she is also a graduate of the University of Connecticut's Executive Leadership Program.

**Please welcome her to the West Hartford Schools.**