

# 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  
Phone (860)561-6651

## Smith STEM School: (continued from page 1)



technology such as computer programs and a recording mixer while writing songs. Physical education and art are also taking steps in this direction. Time spent on science will increase this year through integration but also by guaranteeing more direct STEM time during the week. Every grade level will have guaranteed Science Lab time weekly and direct science instruction in the general classroom by creating a STEM block.

We are also planning this year to add STEM experiences for our students through a vigorous STEM PM program by offering opportunities after school to all our students. We will pursue involvement of our community through programs offered by parents, high school students, and interested local institutions, such as the Bridge. This fall we will be offering robotics after school with a Lego competition and for the first time non-QuEST students will have the opportunity to experience this exciting kind of learning. In order to support these and other efforts at Smith, we have created the position of STEM specialist, a teacher leadership position replacing the assistant principal. The STEM specialist supports the teachers in implementing these critical initiatives in every classroom.

## Leadership Appointments (continued from page 3)

Replacing Mr. Einhorn as interim assistant principal at Hall High School is Jasdeep Singh. Mr. Singh was until recently a science teacher at Sedgwick where he assumed many leadership roles especially working with the Student Success Team, anti-bullying program, technology, and revision of the science curriculum. He received his BS and MA from the University of Connecticut, completed his administrative requirements at the University of Hartford and has just had his doctoral proposal approved at the University of Hartford. His enthusiasm, strong communication skills, eagerness to support the learning of all students and excellent rapport with parents will enhance the Hall community.

Please welcome all four leaders as they travel up the career ladder and expand their circles of influence to create a better future for our children.



### 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.



*Mission*  
To inspire and prepare all students to realize their potential and enhance our global community

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- New Leadership Appointments
- CMT/CAPT Results
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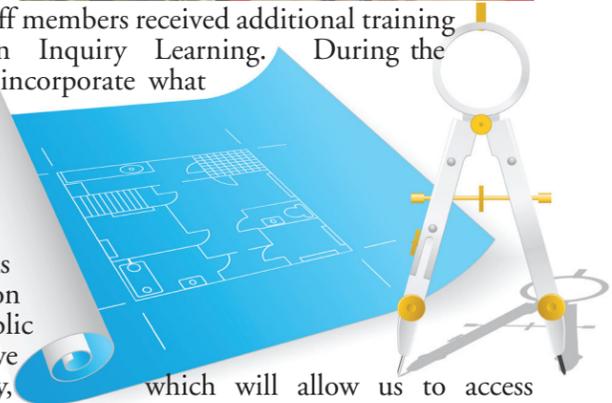
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## Smith STEM School: Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics

Smith School began a 3-5 year process of providing our staff with professional development in the area of inquiry-based teaching and learning. It all started at the end of last year when teachers were trained in engineering by the Museum of Science in Boston. Then, over the summer about 20 staff members received additional training at the Connecticut Science Center on Inquiry Learning. During the 2012-2013 school year teachers will incorporate what they have learned into all classrooms as they begin units on engineering using the Engineering is Elementary Program. In addition to training, we are making an effort at Smith to incorporate state-of-the-art technology. Thanks to a generous grant from the Foundation for the West Hartford Public Schools, we now have video conference capability, which will allow us to access STEM expertise from virtually any corner of the world. We have formed a partnership with NASA and plan to expand this partnership with local colleges and corporations with a focus on science. Also, we are investing in acquiring clickers in all grades to monitor student progress "on the spot" during instruction. Smith School is also pioneering the use of iPads, which have been purchased for use by all students from prekindergarten through grade 5 and will be available for use in the Science Lab.



with particular attention on STEM-related topics. We have incorporated STEM-related instruction in our nonacademic subjects as well. For example, we have created a recording studio that will allow students to use



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## Leadership Appointments

Last month, Dr. Karen List announced the appointment of Principal Dr. Nancy DePalma as the interim assistant superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment through June 30, 2013. Dr. DePalma will be replacing Dr. Eileen Howley, who has accepted the position of executive director of LEARN, the regional educational service center (RESC) in the southeast corner of the state. We are grateful to Dr. Howley for the contribution she has made during her 3 ½ years in the district and wish her well in her new endeavor.



Left to right: Hall High School Advanced Robotics Class, Bristow Middle School Science Class, Suzuki Lessons at Smith STEM Elementary School



Dr. DePalma is an exemplary leader who has served the West Hartford community for more than 25 years as a school counselor, department supervisor, and principal at both Hall High School and Whiting Lane.

Her contribution to the district has been widespread given her prekindergarten–grade 12 leadership experience, strong communication and interpersonal skills, respected reputation, and special education expertise. It is because of these qualities that Dr. DePalma was selected to move into this critical leadership position. She will assume her new role on November 19, 2012.

At the same time, we want to be certain to provide Whiting Lane with continued strong leadership while Dr. DePalma is serving the larger community. We are delighted to announce the appointment of Karen Kukish as interim principal at Whiting Lane for the remainder of the school year. Ms. Kukish has been an assistant principal at King Philip Middle School since 2007, and before that was a 6th grade teacher and team leader there. She possesses outstanding interpersonal skills, sensitivity to the needs of all learners,



teaching and learning expertise, and passion for doing what is right and good for children. She completed all of her undergraduate and graduate work at the University of Connecticut and will begin on November 12, 2012.

Dr. Karen List also announced the appointment of Thomas Einhorn as interim principal at Hall High School through June 30, 2013. Mr. Einhorn is replacing Principal Dr. Donald Slater who has accepted the position of chief operating officer for the Hartford Public Schools. We are grateful to him for the exceptional leadership he

provided to our district during his ten-year tenure as “Proud Principal of Hall High School.”

Mr. Einhorn is an outstanding leader who has served the Hall High School community as assistant principal since 2002. His reputation as a clear, articulate communicator, with a



collaborative, approachable style and a record of forging solid connections among colleagues, families and the community will serve Hall High School well. He brings vision and integrity to the position that will mobilize the Hall High community especially as we prepare for the NEASC accreditation in fall, 2013. Mr. Einhorn began his role on October 1.

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## 2012 CAPT Scores

The spring 2012 CAPT scores declined slightly from 2011’s record levels. West Hartford saw an average of 67.1% of students reach goal on the CAPT, down from last year’s level of 69.9%. Scores went down in all 4 subject areas – down 6 points in science, down 2 points in math and reading and down 1 point in writing. The table below details the CAPT results for the district and each high school for the last 3 years.

At Conard, overall scores decreased by 6.0% to an average of 64.7% at mastery. Scores decreased in all 4 subject areas. Math, science and reading saw the largest drops of 6 to 8 points, while writing was down only 2 points. Overall scores returned to the levels of 2010 which are strong performance levels, just not quite as strong as 2011.

At Hall, overall scores increased by 0.5% to an average of 70.1% at mastery. Scores were down 3 points in science, flat in writing, and up 3 points in math and reading. Hall has maintained this excellent level of performance for 4 years now.

In the 3rd generation CAPT tests, the state assesses 10th grade students in the following four areas:

- Math
- Science
- Reading Across the Disciplines
- Writing Across the Disciplines

Conard	2010	2011	2012
Math	55.1%	61.6%	54.8%
Science	58.3%	70.7%	61.9%
Reading	69.3%	69.0%	62.8%
Writing	74.4%	81.3%	79.1%
Average of 4 tests	64.3%	70.7%	64.7%
Hall	2010	2011	2012
Math	70.1%	63.6%	66.2%
Science	68.0%	68.2%	64.8%
Reading	67.8%	68.0%	71.0%
Writing	76.8%	78.5%	78.3%
Average of 4 tests	70.7%	69.6%	70.1%

Top scores shaded in green.

## 2012 CMT Scores

West Hartford’s CMT scores were the highest they have ever been in the 2012 test administration. The initiatives implemented through the District Development and Performance Planning process continue to bear fruit in raising our performance on the CMT’s. Interested parties looking for more CMT data than that presented here can go to [www.ctreports.com](http://www.ctreports.com) and, on the public portion of the site, access an amazing array of student performance data at the school or district level including access to valuable demographic detail.

Overall CMT scores rose on average by 1.3% from 2011’s level of 78.6% at mastery to an overall average of 79.7% of students at mastery. The scores ranged from a low of 72% at mastery in 3rd grade reading to a high of 87.2% at mastery in 7th grade reading. We saw our highest scores ever in 10 of the 18 tests – those scores are highlighted in the table to the right.

### Overall CMT Results:

Grade level	2010	2011	2012	Grade level	2010	2011	2012
Grade 3 Reading	71%	72%	72.0%	Grade 6 Reading	85%	86%	84.5%
Grade 3 Writing	71%	74%	76.4%	Grade 6 Writing	75%	79%	81.1%
Grade 3 Math	76%	77%	76.4%	Grade 6 Math	81%	83%	82.5%
Grade 4 Reading	69%	78%	78.4%	Grade 7 Reading	89%	87%	87.2%
Grade 4 Writing	75%	78%	78.6%	Grade 7 Writing	71%	73%	76.9%
Grade 4 Math	78%	82%	80.3%	Grade 7 Math	83%	79%	76.2%
Grade 5 Reading	76%	74%	80.6%	Grade 8 Reading	82%	82%	85.3%
Grade 5 Writing	80%	80%	81.1%	Grade 8 Writing	73%	72%	77.8%
Grade 5 Math	86%	83%	83.0%	Grade 8 Math	77%	79%	76.3%

Scores highlighted in green are the highest ever.



## State Funding for Charter Oak

At the October 2, 2012 board meeting, the West Hartford legislative delegation, including Senator Beth Bye, Representatives Andy Fleischman, Joe Verengia, and Brian Becker, attended a Board of Education meeting to announce that they had secured 80% state funding for a project at Charter Oak related to its status as a Diversity School. As a result of this legislation the district will receive up to twice the normal level of state reimbursement for eligible construction costs to improve and enhance Charter Oak. The goals of the project are to expand the space available at Charter Oak for magnet students and to provide a facility that will reflect the standards of magnet schools in the state today. At the October 16, 2012 Board meeting, the Board of Education created the Charter Oak Advisory Committee to solicit community input, advise the Board on key elements of the Charter Oak project to include whether to renovate or build a new school and to work with a planning architect on preliminary planning issues.

The committee will be having its first meeting in late October and will work aggressively in November and December in order to present initial findings to the Board of Education in January of 2013.

