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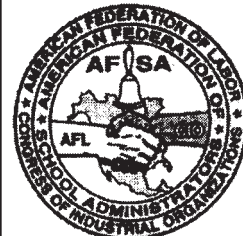
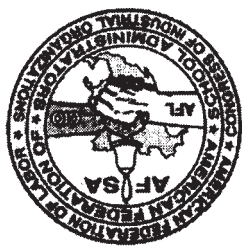
SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

WE WORK FOR

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The Connecticut Federation of School Administrator is the first and only group of professional employees chartered by the AFL-CIO, for the explicit purpose of improving work standards and conditions in Connecticut's public schools.

We represent over 1200 school administrators and supervisors in Connecticut.

Our members are all dedicated, professional, and experienced school administrators.

We provide many free and reduced-cost services.

Our AFL-CIO support group consists of over 13 million members.

Please send ideas, requests, information, and letters you would like published to the editor:

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Connecticut Federation of School Administrators

Members of the American Federation of School Administrators AFL-CIO

STATEment!

February 2007

We Work for School Administrators

Volume 12.0

Message from the President ... Roch J. Girard

CFSA would like to wish you all a Happy and prosperous NEW YEAR! May 2007 be a most positive and professionally satisfying year.

CFSA continues to be involved in many ongoing activities that have serious implications for school administrators. The following is an update on our activities.

Blended Certification Focus Groups:

CFSA has worked with the CEA, CT-AFT, and the Association of Colleges of Teacher Education of Connecticut on the issue of the proposed certification changes by the State Department of Education on what they are calling "Blended Certification".

As professionals we are all concerned with the impact on teachers and administrators and on education overall in Connecticut. This proposal came out of the SDE "Education Continuum Commission, which met last year.

Our organizations immediately spoke out about our concerns with this concept, and the monumental implications of this concept on the practical and operational realities in our schools.

Each organization sought volunteers to serve on what we called "Focus Groups". We held four (4) Focus Groups in four different locations all over the state, in order to get a balanced look at what we, as educators, thought of this concept.

Quite bluntly, the overwhelming response by all of the four groups was one of disbelief in the basic concept



Your CFSA officers are: (standing left) Roch. J. Girard, President; (seated left) Paul J. Rebot, Vice President; (standing right) Dr. James Thompson, Treasurer; and (seated right) Edward J. Roman, Secretary.

behind the proposal. They all had a series of questions regarding the issue or problem it was that the SDE was trying to solve/address with the concept?

Could the SDE concerns be resolved without changing certification requirements? Did the whole certification

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VP's Corner ... Paul J. Rebot

Once again, CFSA must fight the battle on behalf of all school administrators defending the next attack on binding arbitration. While the entire education community of 1700 school administrators will benefit from the efforts of YOUR CFSA UNION, only you through your membership actively support the fight to diminish the effect of good faith negotiations and the importance of binding arbitration.

Our brothers and sisters in New York (no contract since 2003) and Boston (finally a contract after 3 years), as well as many other administrative groups in the right-to-work states (which in my mind means right to work, but not the right to earn a fair living wage) who are unable to negotiate a contract in a timely manner would do anything to have your rights under binding arbitration.

CFSA is ever vigilant to protect your rights when it comes to attacks upon your ability to administrate your buildings and departments in a fair and productive manner. One never knows when a legislative bill or proposal surfaces that can do major damage to governance of your facilities, or place major obstacles in your way hindering your ability to make decisions.

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**President's Message ... continued from Pg. 1**  
 process need to be affected? College preparatory institutions across the state said they doubted very much that they could change their curriculum and degree programs in time for the 2014 change date! The Focus Groups provided practical, sensible and realistic reflections on the concept of blended certification - one which would make ALL teachers certified special education teachers. The report will be sent to the SDE and to the new Commissioner, as well as SDE personnel. We will be forwarding the report to all Presidents, and will ask that the Presidents send the report to all their members.

It was our understanding that the SDE wanted to present these certification changes and seek approval from the State Board of Education in January 2007. The Chairman of the Board put a hold on the entire issue, and will establish another commission to review this proposal before any changes are made.

We will keep you informed about this important issue.

#### Charter Schools and Pilot Schools:

The issue of Charter Schools continues to be of concern to us. In each of our last two STATEment publications, we have voiced our concerns with the direction of the public charter school movement.

We are not opposed to public charter schools, providing they are not in competition with our public schools. The press given to the Charter Schools appears to be all positive, clearly implying that THEY are the solution to our troubled public schools.

We believe that Charter schools can serve as PART of the solution, but they are NOT the solution! In fact, as presently constituted, we believe the Charter School programs cannot be duplicated within our schools, because of the many requirements/restrictions inherent in their programs. It is NOT a level playing field.

In an attempt at looking at other alternatives, CFSA along with CEA and CT-AFT have been visiting what are called PILOT Schools in Boston, Massachusetts. There are some 20 Pilot Schools in Boston.

On November 14th-16th 2006 a conference was held in Boston on "Planning a Pilot School". Administrators, union presidents, teachers and some legislative analysts were in attendance. I was pleased to be there with our New Haven President, Peggy Moore to see the operation of these Pilot Schools in action. Though there are some concerns/questions and issues we have concerning the schools, we appreciated the opportunity to see these schools in operation.

These schools have autonomy in staffing, budget, curriculum assessment, governance and scheduling. Students are selected by lottery with very specific enrollment requirements that must reflect the neighborhood demographics, including many special education and ELL students. Their success is due to smaller class sizes, effective administrators and teachers who work collaboratively. The schools are required to take the MA Assessment Test.

There is a separate contract agreement with the Boston's AFT organization which allows for additional hours of work; a different work year; more professional development; and a separate pay scale. Teachers continue to have "bumping rights, should rifting issues happen, etc.

There is a third partner in this concept - the Center for Collaborative Education - that monitors their operations by providing funding; offering professional development; providing leadership retreats; giving coaching and staff sharing; and dealing with special education issues. The Pilot Schools have parents and community members on their Board of Directors, who vote on school governance issues.

Like our own public charter schools, they can serve as another part of the solution in addressing student/community needs.

We will continue to monitor the progress of these schools and their impact on our public schools.

**The legislature is now in session.** As we begin the New Year, we are very

cognizant that the new legislative session has begun. This year we have a new Governor elected in her own right, and a "Veto Proof" legislature. The realities of this political dynamic will be evident as time goes on. According to John Olsen, President of the State AFL-CIO, 79% of those candidates endorsed by the AFL-CIO were elected/re-elected last November. He stated that it was the labor vote that brought the Democratic victories not only in Connecticut, but across America. In preparation for the session, our lobbyist has alerted us that the following issues will be front and center on the legislative agenda:

**Education Cost Sharing (ECS) Grants:** With the start of a new budget biennium, the legislature will most likely seek proposals to increase state funding for local education- especially through the ECS Grants. With education expenditures being the most costly entity in local community budgets, and with heavy reliance on local property taxes, the state must provide more funding for education.

The legislators and governor are keenly aware of the CCJEF lawsuit in court - in which CFSA is a partner. There is hope that the legislature may seek a threshold of an \$ 8,000 - \$10,000 per student average. CFSA would support these initiatives.

**Special Education Grants:** The cost of special education continues to rise. Local communities are seeking increases in funding for special education needs by restoring separate state reimbursement grants, instead of continuing to include the bulk of state aid for special education in the ECS formula. Some legislators would like to remove the cap on state special education grants to towns - or to make the state solely responsible for paying all special education costs. CFSA would support these initiatives.

**School Security:** Connecticut schools are not immune to violence in our schools. Having experienced a few very serious incidents last school year, legislators may want to increase security measures at schools. Some proposals may require school districts to perform security assessments on school buildings, and update their crisis management plans. CFSA would support these recommendations and further ask for additional security personnel, purchasing of some security devices, cameras and alarms.

**The NCLB Accountability Issue:** The NCLB law has had a most profound impact on education. As more and more schools face the punitive phases of the law by not meeting AYP progress, the state will have to provide locals with remedial help and alternative programs. In fact, federal sanctions include closure and reconstitution of the school to a public charter school; replacement of most staff; takeover by the state itself; or by private management entities!

In order to address the achievement issues, the state will be looking at increasing Early Childhood Education. The Governor has already suggested increasing spending for early Childhood Education by \$ 102 million dollars. The money would increase enrollment for 13,000 children in our "Priority School Districts".

The legislature may want to look at financial incentives for localities to be used in teacher retention and recruitment of teachers in high priority districts. Our interim Commissioner, Dr. George Coleman would like to see monies put into programs that would reduce suspension and expulsion rates in order to close the achievement gap.

CFSA will work with our coalition partners in addressing our collective agendas. We will be very watchful for any changes in the Binding Arbitration Law. We never want to return to the days of "collective begging". We will work toward reaching our goal of crediting 11-12 month employees with their FULL credit toward their retirement. We will continue to seek solvency for our pension fund, and work toward increasing the pitiful \$ 110.00 retirement medical subsidy- which has not been increased since 1998! We will be asking for a CFSA seat on the TRB.

It will be a long legislative session with many competing interests. You



President Girard meets with th Representative Kevin Ryan, Co-Chairman of the Labor Committee with V.P. Rebot on CFSA's legislative Agenda.



CFSA was invited to Senator Christopher Dodd's Connecticut "Kick off" for President of the U.S. on January 17, 2007 in Hartford at the Old State House. President Girard represented CFSA at the function.



Dan Livingston CFSA Attorney



L -R CFSA Attorneys Bob Cheverie and Tom Brockett



Left to Right - Vice President Paul Rebot meets in the office of Senator Edith Prague, Co-Chair of the Labor Committee, with President Girard on CFSA's legislative Agenda at the LOB in Hartford.

## President's Message ... continued from Pg. 2

can be rest assured that we will be at the Capitol representing you and our collective interests.

#### Tools for Schools - Update:

CFSA is a member of the Connecticut School Indoor Environment Resource Team. We are very concerned about the air quality issues within our schools. One of the primary goals is to insure that schools use the Tools for Schools (TfS) program, which addresses the cleaning and maintenance practices throughout the schools. We are pleased to see that currently 600 schools are now following the TfS program. Nearly 3,000 persons have been trained to date. This year 85 additional schools will be in training in the TfS program.

Many CFSA Locals are on board with the TfS program. A number of our Technical Schools are now involved, and two additional Technical Schools have begun the process (Platt and O'Brien Schools). New Haven is now on board with seven schools in training. Bridgeport just signed on. Thompson, Norwich, Windham and Lebanon are also in training. We would like to congratulate the Hartford School System for receiving the National Indoor Air Quality Award last year. CFSA remains a proud partner in this important endeavor.

#### AFSA News:

National President Jill Levy responded to the National Commission Study on the Skills of the American Workforce. This "independent bipartisan commission"... you know what that means...released a report that proposed "dramatic changes that would shake up American public education, in an effort to make the nation more competitive globally". The recommendations included: authorizing school districts to pay companies to run all their schools; enrolling many students in college after the 10<sup>th</sup> grade; and the payment of teachers \$100,000 annually. According to Chairman Charles Knapp, "the commission is calling for a complete shake-up from top to bottom". The 170 page report called "Tough Choices or Tough Times" stated that the recommendations would cost about 60 Billion dollars!!! Administrators should be "contracted", and would be rewarded for successfully running schools, but "fired if student performance languishes". Teachers' beginning salaries should be at least \$ 45,000, and experienced teachers should be at least \$ 95,000 for a normal school year. Teachers who teach in year round schools should get \$110,000. The higher salaries would draw "better candidates" to the teaching ranks. Schools

should be like charter schools but be more "entrepreneurial".

President Levy stated that when you turn public education over to private enterprise, you are essentially abdicating the government's responsibility to schools and communities.

Once that happens, problems with transparency, oversight, corruption and destabilized school districts cannot be far behind. President Levy stated that all these factors are a significant threat to the quality and accountability of education

President Levy further stated that the report was woefully deficient in addressing the issues of children with special needs.

Finally, the 2007 AFSA Scholarship is now available. The \$ 2,500.00 scholarship is available to all CFSA-AFSA members. Contact us at the national office for more information. We have been fortunate in having had three past winners from Connecticut as winners of this scholarship.

#### In Memoriam: George Springer

George C. Springer, Jr., former President of the American Federation of Teachers in Connecticut for over 22 years, passed away last December. George was an outstanding, caring, and personable "gentleman". He was a strong unionist who understood the value and need for a strong union presence in our profession.

George was a master at cutting through the complex problem confronting education and tried to resolve the issues in a positive and dignified manner. He was a giant among us! George will be surely missed. We thank him for his work and for the dignity he brought to our profession.

We extend our deepest sympathy to his wife and family.

## VP's Corner ... continued from Pg. 1

diminishing your authority, how many of you could drop what you're doing and leave your schools to go to the legislative hearings and testify? That's why CFSA is so valuable to your continued existence.

Everyone carries Auto, health, and life insurance. Well we believe all school Administrators should carry **professional insurance** by belonging to the only organization that protects **your professional well-being, CFSA.**

Please encourage those administrators who are non-members to join, and carry their fair share of the burden CFSA carries in protecting the rights of all School Administrators.