



Education Session October 24, 2016

Goal & Objectives

Goal: To provide an overview of the issues affecting the public school education environment in Connecticut and the changing landscape of post-secondary education.

Objectives:

- ❖ To come away with a clear sense of the current status of education in Connecticut within the broader context of national standards and achievement levels.
- ❖ To instill an understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing both teachers and students in Connecticut schools, as well as the initiatives established to address those challenges and opportunities.
- ❖ To provide a broad introduction to options for secondary education, including a tour of Naugatuck Valley Community College.
- ❖ To leave participants with an understanding of opportunities to engage at the local and state level on education issues.
- ❖ To experience firsthand the historical and industrial significance of the City of Waterbury.

Important Session Information

Session Leaders Mel Larkin, Susan Haber, Susan Magee

Advisor Ellen Carter, Director of Community Leadership, *Connecticut Community Foundation*

Session Attire Dressing for comfort is appropriate.

Venues
Brass City Charter School
212 Chestnut Ave, Waterbury, CT 06710

Naugatuck Valley Community College
750 Chase Parkway, Waterbury, CT 06708
Library Building #501



Parking

We will meet at the Commuter Lot across from Naugatuck Valley Community College. The address is 702 Chase Parkway, Waterbury. From here, you will be bussed to Brass City Charter School and Naugatuck Valley Community College.

Directions

From I-84 Eastbound: Take Exit 18. Turn right off the exit, take your next right to go over the highway and then turn left on Chase Parkway. The parking lot will be on the left. [Click here for map.](#)

From I-84 Westbound: Take Exit 18 (West Main St/Highland Ave) and stay to the left. Turn left off the ramp onto West Main St. Go through 2 lights and the commuter lot is on the left, right before the entrance back onto 84 West. [Click here for map.](#)



Agenda

- 8:15 Meet at the Commuter Lot (702 Chase Parkway, Waterbury). Bus will depart promptly at 8:30 for travel to Brass City Charter School.
- 9:00 **Arrival, Light Breakfast and Welcome**
Brass City Charter School Students
Mel Larkin, 2016 WCL Planning Team & 2015 WCL Class Participant
- 9:15 **Education in Connecticut Today**
Jennifer Alexander, CEO, *ConnCAN*
- 10:00 **Educational Challenges in an Urban Community**
Paul Whyte, Instructional Leadership Team, *Waterbury Public Schools*
- 10:45 Break
- 11:00 **Approaches to K-12 Education**
Baba Frew, Director of Community Service and Co-Director of Global Leadership Institute, *Taft School*
Charles Rowland, Assistant Principal and Director of AgriScience & Technology Department, *Wamogo Regional High School*
Dr. Barbara Ruggiero, Executive Director, *Brass City Charter School*
- 12:15 Lunch
- 1:15 **Bus Tour of Waterbury**
Charley Monagan, Author and Retired Editor-in-Chief, *Connecticut Magazine*
- 2:30 Arrival at Naugatuck Valley Community College, Break & Refreshments
- 2:45 **Welcome to Naugatuck Valley Community College**
Dr. Daisy Cocco De Filippis, President, *Naugatuck Valley Community College*
- 3:15 **An Inside Tour of Naugatuck Valley Community College**
- 4:15 Session Day Wrap up
Brief discussion and preview of Human Services Day



Speaker Biographies

Jennifer Alexander

Chief Executive Officer, *ConnCAN*

Jen has over 15 years of experience working on efforts that bridge the gaps between education policy, politics and practice to improve outcomes for children. Since Jen started at ConnCAN in 2010, she has grown a nationally recognized research and policy department and led the formation of statewide coalitions that have helped pass and protect statewide education reforms.

Before joining ConnCAN, Jen worked in Washington, DC as a consultant whose clients included the national Center on Innovation and Improvement. She also served as Senior Research Analyst at the American Institutes for Research (AIR), where she advised studies of Title I implementation and managed national policy centers on comprehensive school reform and supplemental educational services. Jennifer began her career at the national office of the American Federation of Teachers, where she worked on political campaigns and on policy, including the Redesigning Low-Performing Schools Initiative. She has written numerous research, policy and technical assistance tools and conducted trainings for parent organizations across the country. A Connecticut native, certified teacher and mother of two young children, Jen is a graduate of Peabody College at Vanderbilt University and received a Master of Public Policy from Georgetown University.

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Paul Whyte

Instructional Leadership Director, *Waterbury Public Schools*

Paul Whyte currently serves as Instructional Leadership Director for Waterbury Public Schools. Before arriving in Waterbury, he was Principal of New Beginnings Family Academy (NBFA), a public K-8 charter school in Bridgeport, CT. Mr. Whyte transitioned to the role of school leader in 2008. As a principal, he focused on building a culture of achievement and high expectations for students and staff. Under his leadership, NBFA scores on the Connecticut Mastery Test improve dramatically, and NBFA achieved the largest improvement among middle schools in the state in 2010. Prior to serving as the principal, Mr. Whyte oversaw the development of formative assessments, data driven decision making processes, and a new teacher evaluation program. He raised over \$1.1 million in grants for NBFA.

Earlier in his career, Mr. Whyte taught mathematics and ran a college readiness program at Park East High School in New York City. Besides traditional education settings, Mr. Whyte has also focused on bringing sound educational practice to non-traditional education settings such as afterschool and summer programs. As an Echoing Green Fellow, Mr. Whyte created Young Voices Initiative (YVI), a comprehensive education and athletics program for teenagers in New Haven based on two years of field research. He has been a New York Council of Urban Professionals



Fellow, an organization that prepares emerging change agents to become powerful civic and public sector leaders.

Mr. Whyte holds a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Yale University and a Masters of Education in Administration, Planning, and Social Policy from Harvard University Graduate School of Education. He completed the Intermediate Administration and Supervision program at Sacred Heart University and is currently a doctoral candidate at Teachers College, Columbia University.

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Baba Frew

Director of Community Service and Co-Director of Global Leadership Institute, *Taft School*

Baba earned a BA in Human Geography from Middlebury College and an MA in Spanish language and literature at the Middlebury Language School. She has traveled extensively in her native Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean (most recently Cuba) and has studied at the Universidad de Barcelona. Baba is a member of the Modern Language Department and the Global Studies and Service Department at Taft. She currently teaches AP Human Geography and Spanish and serves as co-director of the Global Leadership Institute and Director of Community Service. She is deeply committed to creating service partnerships between Taft students and the surrounding communities, especially Watertown and Waterbury. She coordinates the after-school Community Service program and works closely with the student led Community Service Council to offer students at Taft the opportunity to become involved in a variety of service projects in both the local and global communities. She also mentors young teachers who are enrolled in the University of Pennsylvania Residency in Teaching Master's program.

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Charles Rowland

Assistant Principal and Director of AgriScience & Technology Department,
Wamogo Regional High School

A native of Oxford, Charlie lives on and operates his family farm in addition to his role at Wamogo High School. He earned a BS in Agriculture and Natural Resources from the University of Connecticut and an MS in Environmental Education from Southern Connecticut State University. Currently in his 14th year at Wamogo, he has taught agricultural mechanics and served as department chair until assuming the position of Assistant Principal in June 2016. The agricultural education program provides students opportunities for leadership development through the Future Farmers of America (FFA) and career experience through the Supervised Agricultural Experience program. Charlie's role as coordinator of the program provides outreach into the communities to develop student work placements and entrepreneurship for all enrolled students.



Charlie believes it is the combination of classroom, leadership experience and career exploration that makes the agricultural education model so successful.

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Dr. Barbara Ruggiero

Executive Director, *Brass City Charter School*

Barbara Ruggiero, PhD, is co-founder of Brass City Charter School and has a varied career that demonstrates a life-long commitment to children's academic success. Prior to establishing Brass City Charter School in 2013, Ruggiero served in leadership positions at Children's Community School and Chase Collegiate School. Dr. Ruggiero is a former licensed child psychologist and an experienced school leader with curricular oversight, personnel, community relations, budget, management and fundraising experience. She has a master's degree from Harvard University and a doctorate from Boston University.

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Charley Monagan

Author and Retired Editor-in-Chief, *Connecticut Magazine*

Charles Monagan has been a writer and editor since 1972, when he graduated from Dartmouth College. His work has appeared in many magazines and newspapers, and from 1989 to 2013 he was the editor of *Connecticut Magazine*. In 1997, he won the Gold Medal for Reporting from the National City and Regional Magazine Association. In 2012, he received the Connecticut Press Club's Mark Twain Award for Distinguished Journalism, a lifetime award.

Monagan is the author of 10 books, including *The Neurotic's Handbook*, *The Reluctant Naturalist*, and *How to Get a Monkey into Harvard*. Additionally, he wrote the book and lyrics for the musical *Mad Bomber*, which was produced in 2011 and won first place in the Academy for New Musical Theatre's 2012 international Search for New Musicals.

Like many who grew up in Waterbury, Monagan became familiar with Carrie Welton's name due to the presence of a striking drinking fountain for horses, topped by a life-size bronze stallion, known familiarly as the Carrie Welton Fountain. Much later, he became intrigued with the scant but colorful details of Carrie's youth and her terrible death, and he took up the challenge of giving her a full life in fiction. *Carrie Welton* is Monagan's first novel.

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WESTERN CONNECTICUT
LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Dr. Daisy Cocco De Filippis

President, *Naugatuck Valley Community College*

Since assuming the presidency at Naugatuck Valley Community College in 2008, Daisy Cocco De Filippis, Ph.D., has instilled a shared vision of community, student-centeredness, collaboration and civic-engagement. Prior to coming to NVCC, Dr. De Filippis served as provost and senior vice president for academic affairs at Eugenio Maria de Hostos Community College of the City University of New York (CUNY). Dr. De Filippis began her career at York College, also part of the CUNY system, as an adjunct lecturer in 1978, advancing to become a professor of Spanish and ultimately being appointed associate dean for academic affairs. Dr. De Filippis holds a Ph.D. in Spanish language and a M. Phil. in Spanish literature from the Graduate School and University Center of CUNY, an M.A. in Spanish literature and a B.A. in Spanish and English literatures summa cum laude from Queens College, CUNY. A published author and literary critic, her scholarly work is recognized internationally as pioneering the field of Dominican women studies and Dominican authors in the U.S. As president of NVCC, Dr. De Filippis has been honored by the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission, Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund, the Boys and Girls Club, Habitat for Humanity and the Martin Luther King Jr. Commission.

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