

## Paid by Conn., living elsewhere

Hundreds of state employees work remotely from other states

By Bill Cummings  
STAFF WRITER

A top official at Connecticut's Office of Policy and Management earned over \$140,000 last year while — with the state's blessing — mostly working remotely from his home in Philadelphia.

The entire staff of the Connecticut Paid Leave

Authority, which administers the state's medical leave insurance program, works remotely because the department does not have a centralized office. While most work from within Connecticut, others are scattered between Texas and Maine.

Other state workers are authorized to report remotely to their supervi-

sors from beyond the Nutmeg State, including from Texas, Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina, Washington D.C., New Hampshire and Delaware. The vast majority of out-of-state remote workers live in Massachusetts, Rhode Island and New York State.

A CT Insider review found at least 248 Con-

necticut state employees are permitted to work remotely from another state, with about two dozen workers listing addresses in states beyond Massachusetts, Rhode Island and New York State, under a telework policy, borne out of the need for remote work during the COVID pandemic, which covers all aspects of state

government, except for hazardous duty roles, such as correction officers and other law enforcement.

In all, 11,514 executive branch state employees were allowed to work remotely — the vast majority from within the confines of Connecticut — for at least some part of their pay period this year, according to figures provided by state officials. The executive branch, which

is separate from the judicial and legislative branches, employs 32,590 workers performing a wide variety of duties, officials said.

Rob Blanchard, a spokesman for Democratic Gov. Ned Lamont, said Connecticut recognizes telework is part of the modern workplace.

“There is no prohibition on state employees living out of state if they  
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## ‘MORE balanced’



Dave Stewart / Hearst Connecticut Media

Norwalk celebrates after an interception by Kevin Gordon (4, in air) against Wilton on Sept. 21.

## FCIAC football rolls out new competitively matched schedules

By Scott Ericson  
STAFF WRITER

For decades, Friday nights and Saturday afternoons in FCIAC high school football told two very different stories, with some of the state's most high-profile powerhouse programs rolling to lopsided wins on one side and struggling teams simply trying to keep up on the other.

Now, for the first time, the league is stepping into a new era with competitively balanced schedules designed to narrow that gap.

It is an experiment that mirrors moves made by other conferences across Connecticut. This fall will be the first test of whether a more even playing field can be

*FCIAC continues on A6*



Your guide to the season, plus a look at the next generation of top state coaches and the top teams in the FCIAC, SWC and SCC

## State has 22 charter schools

Several more are approved to open

By Crystal Elescano  
STAFF WRITER

Connecticut has 22 charter schools in operation, representing a small but steady share of the state's education system, with several more approved for opening.

This school year, a new all-boys charter school in New Haven, Edmonds Cofield Preparatory Academy for Young Men, opened its doors to more than 50 fifth and sixth grade students.

Earlier in the year, the state Department of Education granted initial approval to five additional charter proposals, which must now secure funding from the legislature before moving forward. Out of the five proposals, three were approved by the state.

The approved charter  
*Schools continues on A4*

## More than \$300K in funding OK'd to redesign Westport Ave. fire station

By Shaniece Holmes-Brown  
STAFF WRITER

NORWALK — One of Norwalk's fire stations will receive a substantial makeover in the coming year, officials said.

The Land Use and Building Management Committee unanimously voted Wednesday night to authorize \$311,200 in funding to Bridgeport-based architectural firm Antinozzi Associates for the  
*Station continues on A6*

## New multivendor marketplace planned

Hoping to fill hole in community left by Mongers Market closure

By Brian Lockhart and Andrew DaRosa  
STAFF WRITERS

BRIDGEPORT — In the spring, Mongers Market, an antique and vintage shoppers' destination on Railroad Avenue, permanently closed after seven years in the city.

For Bridgeport native John Paul O'Grodnick, who operated the MOJO Thrifts booth within Mongers, losing the market was a “very sad” moment because it had become more than a place to buy and sell all sorts of interesting

items.

“It drew a lot of the community together,” he said.

However, Bridgeport will not be without that kind of multi-vendor marketplace for long. O'Grodnick is helping to open a successor business only minutes from the former Mongers Market location.

The Recollective is projected to open in mid-October at 588 State St., according to O'Grodnick, its operations coordinator. He said the site, just on the edge of downtown and former home to the Hearst-owned Connecticut Post printing plant, will feature two

floors of sellers.

O'Grodnick is a local artist and art consultant for the city. After hearing about Mongers' initial closing plans at the beginning of May, he contacted New York City-based developer Kiumarz Geula, who was in the process of purchasing 588 State St. O'Grodnick thought the old manufacturing building would be a great replacement space.

“I pretty much hit the ground running. I started planning in my head of how this could work and how many vendors we can help

*Market continues on A12*



Arnold Gold/Hearst Connecticut Media

A mural is painted on a wall of the Recollective Multivendor Marketplace at the former Connecticut Post printing plant on State Street in Bridgeport on Aug. 29.

