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**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION CONVENES “SCHOOLS OF DISTINCTION”
Schools Recognized for Performance and Share Best Practices**

HARTFORD, CT—Governor Dannel P. Malloy today joined Commissioner Stefan Pryor and the Connecticut State Department of Education at a convening of the “Schools of Distinction,” bringing together representatives from the schools to recognize them for their achievement. A category in Connecticut’s new school measurement system, “Schools of Distinction” represent the state’s schools that exhibited either highest overall performance; highest performing subgroups; or highest progress. The classification serves to identify schools as exemplars of best practices. Through facilitated discussion groups, schools shared effective programs and approaches working in their schools that support student learning and explored ways to make this information available to other schools and districts.

“Connecticut has redoubled efforts to provide the best education to all of our students no matter where they live, which school they attend, or socioeconomic status,” said Governor Malloy. “Last year we invested \$100 million in our schools, and this year I’m proposing more than \$150 million in additional Educational Cost Sharing funding over the biennium—resources that will be largely targeted to our underperforming schools. I applaud the schools that are here today—their commitment to education is tremendous and they are part of the larger conversation about replicating what works in education.”

“Ensuring that each and every student has an opportunity to succeed in college, career, and life is the collective responsibility of the entire Connecticut education community. We are grateful for the distinguished leadership and commitment of Governor Malloy, who continues to make education a top priority in his administration,” said Commissioner Pryor. “We thank the ‘Schools of Distinction’ for sharing their best practices so that other schools might benefit from their experiences and congratulate the administrators, teachers, and students on their designation.”

“By sharing best practices today, these ‘Schools of Distinction’ will provide a valuable resource for districts that are considering options for improving learning experiences in their schools,” said Debra Kurshan, Chief Turnaround Officer at the Department of Education. “We look forward to continuing to explore ways the Department can support districts and facilitate opportunities for schools and districts to connect in a peer-to-peer capacity.”

In February 2012, the Connecticut State Department of Education participated in a federal application process for flexibility from certain requirements of No Child Left Behind. In May, the U.S. Department of Education approved Connecticut’s flexibility request (or waiver), allowing the State to establish a new accountability system.

The new performance measurement system improves the State's ability to provide more accurate and appropriate interventions, support and recognition to local schools. The "Schools of Distinction" category serves to recognize schools as exemplars of best practices. Identified annually, Title I and non Title I schools are recognized in three areas: highest overall performance; highest performing subgroup; or highest progress.

This year's "Schools of Distinction" category is comprised of 97 schools in 54 districts. Thirteen schools are from the Alliance Districts (the thirty districts statewide deemed to be in greatest need of state support).

For a complete listing of this year's "Schools of Distinction," please visit:
http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/nclb/waiver/distinction_schools.pdf

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