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THREE SCHOOLS ADDED TO THE COMMISSIONER'S NETWORK

*State Board of Education Approves Turnaround Plans
for Schools in New Britain, Bridgeport, and New Haven*

(HARTFORD, CT)—The State Board of Education yesterday approved the turnaround plans of three schools for participation in the Commissioner's Network, a central reform in last year's bipartisan, landmark education legislation. The Commissioner's Network provides intensive interventions and support to the state's chronically underperforming schools. The addition of New Britain's DiLoreto Magnet School, Bridgeport's P.L. Dunbar School, and New Haven's Wilbur Cross High School brings the total number of schools accepted into the Commissioner's Network to seven.

The turnaround plans approved yesterday represent an assortment of turnaround models and enlist a variety of strategies, including extended learning time, partnerships with proven high-quality partners, and intensive professional development. Two of the three schools focus on serving the needs of English language learners.

"Connecticut's economic future depends on the decisions we make now around public education," said Governor Dannel P. Malloy. "We have committed more than \$100 million to turn around underperforming schools and get resources directly to teachers and students. In Commissioner's Network schools across the state, we are already seeing good things happen—improving school climates, an increase in participation, and better student outcomes. These are local solutions that replicate what works in our schools to prepare our young people for higher education and beyond."

The biennial budget adopted by the General Assembly this legislative session included \$27.5 million dollars proposed by Governor Malloy to fund the expansion of the Commissioner's Network to a total size of up to 21 schools over the next two years.

"For too long, the state has sat on the sidelines rather than getting directly involved with Connecticut's chronically underperforming schools. The Commissioner's Network enables the State Department of Education to partner directly with school districts in order to support the turnaround of struggling schools," said State Department of Education Commissioner Stefan Pryor. "We are enormously grateful to Governor Malloy for his unyielding support for public education as a top policy and budgetary priority, which made the expansion of the Commissioner's Network possible. Likewise, we are grateful to the General Assembly for making strong continuing investments in the initiatives that were launched

by our bipartisan, landmark education legislation.”

Earlier this year, Commissioner Pryor invited schools that expressed interest to begin drafting turnaround plans. Development of each turnaround plan was directed by a local turnaround committee, with representation from parents, teachers, and school district administration, as well as a designee of the Education Commissioner. The turnaround plans include flexibilities on personnel, time, money, and programming.

After an iterative process that included feedback from Commissioner Pryor and his representatives, the final turnaround plans for three of the seven schools were presented to the State Board of Education for approval. The remaining four schools continue to refine their turnaround plans.

As outlined in its plan, DiLoreto Magnet School in New Britain will implement the English Language Development model with the goal of developing students who are bi-literate in English and Spanish by eighth grade. With 52 percent of the student population classified as English language learners (ELLs), these students will be supported through the English Language Development (ELD) program. All students, including ELLs, will benefit from the Spanish Language Development (SLD) program. The turnaround plan is designed to improve reading and English language proficiency, while decreasing chronic absenteeism.

P.L. Dunbar School and Bridgeport Public Schools will partner with Jumoke Academy to implement the Family Urban Schools of Excellence (FUSE) model, which will provide the school with additional capacity and turnaround expertise. The school is focused on improving reading proficiency and school climate, as well as increasing student enrollment and overall student achievement.

New Haven’s Wilbur Cross High School will partner with Internationals Network for Public Schools to launch the International Academy at Wilbur Cross (IAWC). This academy will create a small learning community for English language learners and general education students within the high school, emphasize a project-based learning approach, and will scale up over three years to a substantial presence within the school. The intention of the plan is to increase academic rigor and improve graduation rates and student attendance.

Schools remain in the Commissioner’s Network for three years, with the potential for an extension based on the status of turnaround efforts. Supplemental funding is provided by the state based on the model chosen, number of students served, and selected strategies as outlined in the schools’ turnaround plans.

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