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## **97 TEACHERS SELECTED FOR 'CONNECTICUT DREAM TEAM'**

Teachers to Participate in Common Core Professional Development

(Hartford, CT)– The State Department of Education (SDE) today announced that 97 teachers from 86 schools across Connecticut will take part in TeachFest Connecticut, an intensive professional learning session on the Common Core State Standards, where they will develop high-quality resources to be shared with fellow teachers. The 'Connecticut Dream Team' will continue working with their peers in the weeks following TeachFest and later serve as teacher leaders at a larger event this summer. Participants teach a wide spectrum of different grade levels, with 60 specializing in English language arts and 37 in mathematics.

“TeachFest will provide teachers with the opportunity to collaborate and innovate as they develop high-quality Common Core resources to be shared with their colleagues. Participants will also serve as teacher leaders in future Common Core-related events and activities. We thank and congratulate the teachers who have volunteered and been selected for the Connecticut Dream Team,” State Department of Education Commissioner Stefan Pryor said. “This is a new and exciting element of our growing array of Common Core supports for teachers and school leaders. We are grateful to Governor Malloy and the General Assembly for providing the resources that enable us to provide these critical supports for educators.”

TeachFest Connecticut represents one of the professional development opportunities supported by the State Department of Education regarding the implementation of the Common Core State Standards. The Connecticut Dream Team will first convene in Hartford from April 25-27 for TeachFest Connecticut, a celebration of teaching and an intensive, structured working session facilitated by LearnZillion. A provider of digital curriculum and professional development for the Common Core, [LearnZillion](#) developed this innovative model.

“Connecticut teachers’ response to this opportunity has been wonderful,” said Eric Westendorf, CEO of LearnZillion. “We’re excited to support the SDE’s commitment to teachers by sharing our high-energy, rigorous and practical approach to developing exceptional instructional practice with the Connecticut Dream Team.”

Following TeachFest, the Connecticut Dream Team members will return to their 86 elementary, middle and high schools to continue working with peers and content coaches in facilitated online

professional learning communities (PLCs). During this process, the Dream Team members will translate their proven teaching methods and classroom expertise into high-quality Common Core resources for use by teachers in Connecticut and will be available on [CTCoreStandards.org](http://CTCoreStandards.org). These resources will also be made available to teachers across the country, through a free Common Core resource library.

“We applaud all of the teachers who stepped up and volunteered to serve in this important role. Their firsthand classroom experience will be invaluable in helping their colleagues effectively implement Common Core -- an effort that has been a significant challenge for so many of our state’s schools,” AFT Connecticut President Melodie Peters said. “Classroom educators were among the first to speak out and urge that their voices be heard in making new teaching standards work when they were adopted four years ago. This effort reflects a major step forward for implementing the core set of standards because it empowers teachers to train teachers.”

The Connecticut Dream Team will later serve as teacher leaders for a “Common Core Fest” to be held for hundreds of teachers across the state on July 29, 2014.

In addition to the LearnZillion experience, the State Department of Education is already sponsoring a series of professional development opportunities for educators across Connecticut. Since the beginning of the school year, school and district leaders have taken part in “communities of practice” — gatherings which focus on implementing the new standards and sharing best practices already in place. Also, the SDE has convened over 1,500 teachers from 163 districts as Common Core Coaches to develop expertise in the new standards through a series of trainings and webinars. Common Core training opportunities are also being designed for 600 new teachers, student teachers and their mentors, as well as the faculty of teacher-preparation programs.

The K-12 educators selected for the Connecticut Dream Team were chosen through a competitive statewide application on the basis of their content knowledge, grit, and understanding of the Common Core State Standards. Each educator demonstrated the commitment and ability to “scale their impact” beyond their classroom.

A complete list of teachers named to the Connecticut Dream Team may be found [here](#).

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