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## New grant program to strengthen the arts in education

Commissioner Pryor unveils multi-agency partnership at annual Back to School meeting

(HARTFORD, CT) — The Connecticut State Department of Education today announced a new grant program to strengthen the arts in education.

The State Department of Education (SDE) has joined with the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD), Connecticut Office of the Arts and the Connecticut Arts Council to provide mini-grants of up to \$50,000 for schools to enhance arts instruction through partnerships with local and state arts institutions, organizations, and artists.

“When we expose our young people to the arts, we give them the chance to explore a world far beyond their immediate surroundings,” said Governor Dannel P. Malloy. “These cultural investments will directly enrich lives of students and allow us to preserve and enhance the humanities across Connecticut schools.”

Speaking Tuesday at the state’s annual Back to School meeting for superintendents, Commissioner of Education Stefan Pryor announced that up to \$250,000 will be made available to schools statewide in this first round of funding.

“Inclusion of the arts is essential to ensuring a high-quality and well-rounded educational experience for students,” Commissioner Pryor said. “These funds will help schools strengthen their arts programming by encouraging them to form meaningful partnerships with local and statewide arts organizations and institutions.”

The Office of the Arts, which administers the nationally recognized Higher Order Thinking (HOT) Schools model, offers expertise in arts integration in schools. Applicant schools will be asked to identify their place on a scale of need for support with arts access, connection or integration, as defined in the HOT Schools model.

"DECD is excited by the potential of this partnership to strengthen the integration of arts, artists and arts organization into our public schools. In addition to nurturing the next generation of creative minds, art and culture in our schools is essential to the creation of well-rounded students prepared to lead rich and rewarding lives," DECD Commissioner Catherine Smith said.

Successful applications will include plans for how the funding will help the school deepen and sustain their arts programming in concert with a partner institution or artist. Winning applicants will also demonstrate how they will share with other districts and schools the best practices they have developed. Applications that include parent and/or civic engagement will receive preference.

Schools may use the money for supplies, technical assistance, professional development, stipends for teaching artists, professional facilitation with arts institutions, and more. Applications will be due in October. More information will be available on the State Department of Education's Web site next month.

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