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More than 1,500 Hartford Fifth Graders Will Go to College in April

During the week of April 4- 8, more than 1,500 fifth graders from Hartford Public Schools will visit one of eleven college campuses in Connecticut, most of them in Greater Hartford. Taking this many fifth grade-students to college campuses is unprecedented in Hartford. Students will tour the campus, meet with college students and hear about campus life, participate in a fun interactive activity such as a robotics demonstration or lesson in the computer or science lab, and eat lunch. The goal of the program is to encourage students to prepare and plan for college early in their school years.

Working in concert with Hartford Public Schools and St. Paul Travelers, the Hartford Consortium for Higher Education recruited eleven campuses to develop unique programs to engage fifth graders. The participating campuses are Capital Community College, Central Connecticut State University, Eastern Connecticut State University, Manchester Community College, Saint Joseph College, Southern Connecticut State University, Trinity College, University of Connecticut, Greater Hartford Campus in West Hartford, and University of Connecticut at Storrs, University of Hartford, and Wesleyan University.

Each student will receive a book to add to his or her library, information about attending college and a T- shirt with a positive message about going to college. This ambitious effort will be evaluated using surveys from teachers and college personnel.

“Hartford Public School students have a world of potential in front of them. By exposing them to a campus environment at this early age, the idea of going to college moves from a dream, to a realistic goal that they can and will achieve. We are grateful to St. Paul Travelers and the Consortium for Higher Education for making this possible,” said Robert Henry, Superintendent of Schools in Hartford.

“Getting young people to imagine that college is possible for them is an important inducement to studying in middle and high school, said Walter Harrison, chair of the board of directors of the Hartford Consortium and President of University of Hartford.

“All of the colleges and universities in this effort are united in trying to make that vision of the future possible for Hartford’s fifth graders.”

Fifth Graders Go to College 2005 will be made possible by the generous contributions of St. Paul Travelers Connecticut Foundation. Other corporate sponsors are being solicited.